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ABSTRACT

Ten thematic articles explore the spiritual implications for the creation of a world of greater justice and peace. Examples of topics discussed in the articles follow. Some rather startling implications of recent findings in psychological and psychic research which suggest that we are at the threshold of new and deeper public understanding of the origins of human values are examined. The contribution of African religion to world order is discussed. The differences between Eastern and Western spiritual orientation are treated. One article stresses that the new world order is people, the possibility of their becoming more human, and the development of more just life structures for themselves. Other topics examined include the idea of a world covenant and the need for global spirituality. (Author/RM)

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THE WHOLE EARTH PAPERS

No. 16

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SPIRITUALITY AND WORLD ORDER

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THE WHOLE EARTH PAPERS

Dear reader,

We are pleased to present this special issue of *The Whole Earth Papers*, exploring the theme *Spirituality and World Order*. It has from the beginning been a goal of *The Whole Earth Papers* to include not only structural analysis but also the inner, spiritual and psychological foundations for a more human world order.

The subject of a global spirituality for our age is a multi-faceted and rich area for exploration. There were many fine articles submitted for this issue which for reasons of space we could not include. The articles chosen for inclusion are not intended as a comprehensive or definitive coverage of what global spirituality is nor of all the spiritual implications for the creation of a world of greater justice and peace. The authors in this issue are simply pointing us in a few important directions. Even then, we feel the absence of perspectives from Islam, Taoism, Baha'i, Buddhism and other traditions.

We see the work of developing a truly *global* and a truly *relevant* spirituality for this new period of global interdependence as a task each of us must struggle with as we undertake our personal journeys and our common earth journey. It is our hope that after reading and reflecting on these authors' perspectives, each of you will share from your own experience toward the development of a meaningful global spirituality. We also welcome any suggestions you may have for furthering this dialogue.

With best wishes from myself
and the staff at Global Education Associates,

Pat Mische

Pat Mische
Editor, *The Whole Earth Papers*

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Our spiritual journey — our search in life for God — must be worked out now in a global context, in the midst of global crises and global community. Our spirituality must be a global spirituality.

TOWARD A GLOBAL

At this point in world history there is no more important area for exploration and growth than global spirituality. For we are entering a new phase of humanity's development. We have new powers never even imagined, much less experienced by our ancestors. We can create new life forms in test tubes. We can alter the DNA — the delicate genetic coding that has developed through millions of years of natural selection. We can change the earth's climatic conditions and temperature through over-consumption of fossil fuels,[1] deforestation, nuclear testing or weather tampering. We can choose the extinction or continued existence of over 600,000 plant and animal species whose survival is now threatened by human activities.[2] We can destroy all life on earth through our weapons of mass destruction.[3]

We have become as gods with the power to create and destroy life. But we have not developed the inner wisdom to manage these new powers in life-preserving ways. There has been a dangerous lag in our development — a lag that is both spiritual and systemic.

We are entering a new and dangerous phase in human history and in the earth's evolution. We can consciously shape the future evolution of the planet. A new maturity is demanded of us. We must become wiser than we've ever been before, for the world is far more complex than our old visions, analyses and structures can accommodate. We must become more conscious and more holistically spiritual than ever before. Our awareness and our spirituality must be attuned to the sacred presence in all life — to the inner workings of the Spirit in the earth's processes — lest we destroy our own lifeline out of arrogance.

We must be spiritually strong and mature enough to go through psychic death — dying to old structures and worldviews and divisions that can no longer meet the new imperatives of survival and humanization. And we must be spiritually young and creative enough to dream new dreams, conceive new myths, birth new social systems and nurture new unities and cooperation . . .

Spirituality as the term is used here does not mean pious practices and rituals. It is not the surface facade of religiosity. It does not mean genuflecting, bowing, sitting in the lotus position, lighting vigil lights or visiting shrines, (although such practices may have symbolic value). Authentic spirituality is awakening awareness and conscious attunement to the sacred source of life. At the deepest part of every and all being is the sacred. Spirituality is the process of ordering our life in intimate communion with this sacred center and source.

SPIRITUALITY

BY PATRICIA MISCHE

PATRICIA MISCHE, is co-founder of Global Education Associates and editor of The Whole Earth Papers. She and Gerald Mische are co-authors of Toward a Human World Order. Currently she is working on a book on Women, Power and Alternative futures.

Spirituality is not static. It is not a finished state we ever finally achieve and then hold onto. It is a process. It is a sacred journey.

It is a sacred journey we each are called to make. In a certain sense we each make this journey alone. No one else can make it for us. But in another sense we make this journey together, in communion with others. The whole planet with all its life forms and billions of people — indeed the whole cosmos — is on a collective journey. This is true in a physical sense as we hurl through space. This is also true in a spiritual sense. There is a sacred source at our collective center from which all our separate journeys originate and in which we all find life and direction.

There is a flow between this collective earth journey and our personal journeys. They cannot be separated. We are all part of an ongoing cosmogenesis. The whole cosmos is in a process of Becoming. The earth is in a process of Becoming. So are all its inhabitants — the trees, water, flowers, crickets, humming birds, humans. We are all Becoming. We are all developing worlds that are part of the larger developing world community in a developing universe.

A Global Age

True spirituality — the authentic religious journey — can never be an escape from life's problems. God, the sacred center at the source of all authentic spiritual journeys, must be met in the midst of life, not in escape from life. Today we live in a *global* age — an age of planetary exploration and communications and new global interdependencies. Our spiritual journey — our search for life in God — must be worked out now in a global context, in the midst of global crises and global community. Our spirituality must be a global spirituality.

The failure to find an adequate, creative response to the critical global issues before us as we approach the year 2000 is not due primarily to a lack of knowledge that we have critical problems. Most people — even 10-year olds in primary school — know the world is in trouble and can name the most critical issues. Of the young people I have interviewed with open-ended questions about their views on the future, over 80 percent believe a nuclear war is inevitable before the year 2000. Most believe worldwide hunger, pollution, unemployment, inflation and economic problems will be worse. They feel powerless before the complexity and global scale of these problems. They feel there are no solutions and they despair. Many question whether there is going to be a world future. And in light of that ultimate doubt about species survival, they question whether their personal lives have any meaning.[4] This despair about the world future is not just prevalent among young people. Adults are experiencing it also.[5]

Strength/Stress Equation

What seems to be missing for many people is not the knowledge that the world has problems, but the inner, spiritual and psychic strength to cope with the severity, complexity and global scale of these problems. Also missing is the strength of a compelling image of positive alternatives to provide hope and initiative. There is a strength/stress equation related to finding an adequate response to crises.[6] The stress on the human system (whether the inner psychic system or social systems) must not exceed the capacity of corresponding strengths to respond. Put conversely, we need to develop strengths (both inner, psychic and spiritual strengths and external institutional strengths) equal to the strain imposed by the problems and dangers of our new, interdependent world.

A Spiritual Vacuum in Modern Development

Lacking an adequate inner or spiritual strength to cope or respond creatively to critical world problems, people easily become burned out, their energy and vitality consumed by modern pressures and by a fragmentation and multiplicity of concerns. Cut off from the spiritual roots of past traditional societies and not having grown new spiritual roots in the new global age we have entered, many experience a tremendous spiritual void.

This may be one reason why in a recent poll millions of Japanese identified the number one problem of Japan not as environmental pollution but as *spiritual aridity*. It may be also why over 500 new religions have been started in Japan since World War II.

It may also explain why so many people in North America and Europe have been seeking enlightenment from Eastern gurus, joining charismatic communities, fundamentalist groups or new religions or para-religions. Having found that material success and progress do not bring fulfillment or answer all of life's critical questions, some pursue the latest religious group looking for some kind of enlightenment and fulfillment. Others, seeking absolute answers in a period of uncertainty and vulnerability, surrender their analytical, judgment and decision-making powers to religious cults or fundamentalist groups in exchange for moral certitude and promises of one brand or another of salvation.

This spiritual hunger is symptomatic of all areas of the world where modern scientific and industrial development has grown without a commensurate spiritual growth. The modern age that emanated from the West and spread worldwide developed in a spiritual vacuum. Western Christianity over the last 500 years since the Protestant Reformation was so divided against itself and so taken up in factional wars and competition for control of people's minds, hearts and souls, (and several centuries before that in external pieties and corruption), that it offered little real moral or spiritual guidance for the application of new scientific, industrial and technological developments. Without a spiritual corrective, the new discoveries and technology were used to advance an unprecedented assault on the planet and its peoples. The slave system, war system and other forms of human exploitation, and the will to dominance were escalated to new heights of destructiveness in the West. The whole world — and with it whole cultures and civilizations — was carved up on European drawing boards and portions claimed as the possession of one or another European sovereignty.

But the roots of the Western will to dominance and control go deeper than the spiritual lag of the modern era and the brokenness of Christendom. This will to dominance is rooted in the founding myths and religious worldview of the West — in the way it views the earth and nature as something apart from God — the sacred source of life — and as something apart from humans. Rather than seeing nature and the earth as something that human beings are part of, nature has been seen as an object for human domination and control.

Jean Houston describes this fatal flaw in the Western worldview thus:

> *The origins of the problem of technological growth and psychological change lie deep in the western psyche, and specifically, in its religious roots. In the first chapter of Genesis, God is not consonant with His Creation. It is a "handiwork" which He declares "Good." In many other myths and scriptures of the beginning times the god is implicit in the creation, is often indistinguishable from it. He or She is the Sky or the Earth, the Primal Waters or a Shooting Star. In the Judeo-Christian story there is an immediate distancing between Creator and creation, an I-it objectification of reality. The world and all that lies within is manufactured from without and so is "other." And the being created in the image of God, man, is similarly authorized to be dominant and removed from the subhuman world.*[7]

The will to dominance *over the earth* leads to a will to dominance *over other humans*, other races, other cultures, other religions. It leads not only to violations against the environment but also to violations of human rights. "Other" humans are seen as separate from self or "us" rather than as sharing one life flow.

A worldview in which one is *over* the earth also leads to existential loneliness and spiritual deprivation. When we cut ourselves off from a relationship with nature and the earth processes, we cut ourselves off from the physical and spiritual sources of our own potential fulfillment. When we destroy or deny any part of the earth, we deny and destroy part of our own essence. We are from the earth and of the earth. What we do to the earth we do to ourselves.

Technology and Nationalism as False Gods

With a lack of spiritual grounding and right relationship to the earth, faith was placed in science, machines and material progress to solve all problems and create a new heaven on earth. Nationalism, too, became a new religion and people worshiped their national sovereignty and identity in delusions of power, supremacy and separateness. The external forms of Western Christianity and other traditional religions failed to offer people the in-depth spiritual strengths and vision to manage the resulting crises.

Marxism

For some, for a while, Marxism and atheistic communism seemed more responsive and more relevant to modern crises than any of the traditional religions. But the materialist dialectic and class analysis have proved too limited for understanding the human psyche and spirit or to be an adequate guide to the future. The human person is far too complex to be reduced to *Homo economicus*. Likewise, the earth (of which humans are a part) cannot be reduced to a "means of production." While Marxism provides a useful tool for some aspects of social analysis, it suffers from the same limitations as the Western paradigm of dominance over the earth. In fact it grew out of and subsists in that Western paradigm. While it has challenged domination of one class by another, it has never challenged the paradigm of human dominance over the earth from which class dominance feeds. Nor has it provided deep enough spiritual and philosophic foundations to support the new, global age we are entering.

A New Global Order

This is an age of tremendous problems and tremendous promise. We are at a critical point when future human survival is not guaranteed, but must be consciously sought. Old orders and systems are dying; they are inadequate to cope with the new dangers and problems of this period. A new world order has not yet been born. We are the midwives who must help give birth to this new global order.

A new world order needs to be born *within* us first, in a transformed consciousness; in a right ordering of our spirit, mind, heart and will. Real changes, the real transformations in history, have begun with inner spiritual changes. The great transforming agents, the formers of new culture, have been spiritual leaders: Buddha, Lao-tse, Abraham, Moses, Mohammed, Jesus, Paul . . .

This new order must also be born in the *outer* order of the *world community* in the form of new systems of greater justice and peace; in a right ordering of our international relationships and structures. A new ordering of the soul requires and seeks a new outer order in the world at large, an order rooted in wisdom and compassion.

The more we grow in awareness of our own sacred source, the more we discover that our own sacred source is the sacred source of each person and all that is in the universe. In God, all are sacred. All 4.5 billion persons on the planet are sacred. All are loved by God, including those we consider our enemies.

THE GLOBAL SPIRITUAL JOURNEY

The new web of global interdependencies that binds us together, and the tremendous stresses and complex moral choices before us, require a far deeper and more far reaching spirituality than at any time in previous history. We do not need a return to the external facades of religiosity. But we do need to resume the spiritual journey with a more penetrating vision, purpose and sense of direction and within new, global parameters.

There is much that could be said about global spirituality and still much for all of us to discover. But in the short remaining space here, I will limit myself to three important dimensions of the global spiritual journey: the journey inward, the journey outward and the journey forward.

A spiritual journey is not made on a straight road that goes only in one direction — from the individual to God or the Buddha nature or nirvana or personal fulfillment. It is not a horizontal road. Neither is it a vertical "Jacob's ladder" which the human climbs in search of a transcendent God or life source or personal realization. Matthew Fox suggests that the image of Jacob's ladder be replaced with the image of "Sarah's circle" as the appropriate context for spiritual discovery because the circle connotes human community and horizontal rather than hierarchical relationships.[8] But Sarah's circle is not the whole picture either. There *are* transcendental realities that the circle may not accommodate. And a circle can become a closed circle, excluding some. A circle can also become fixed in its space and time parameters and fail to respond to new historical needs or to lead the community forward.

The Spiral

Sr. Donald Corcoran suggests that the proper image for the spiritual journey today is the *spiral*, for the spiral travels inward, outward and forward.[9] These are not opposing directions, but part of a flow; a flow that develops in *inner* relationship to transcendental reality; in *outward* relationships in the human community and the whole earth community; and in *forward* relationships to future generations that require conscious participation in creating future history; in ongoing genesis.

Keeping in mind the inseparability of the individual spiritual journey and the larger earth journey, let us briefly consider each of these *dimensions of global spirituality*.

I. The Inward Journey: Discovering the Sacred Source

The inward journey is a journey to the sacred source at the center of every being and all being. It is to enter into the deepest truth of our existence; to separate ourselves from immediate sensory experience and surrounding circumstances and enter the inner source of our life and integrity.

The inward journey is a journey through our deep past — all that has formed us. It cuts through the many layers of tradition, belief, culture, history, symbols that are part of our personal and collective experience. We travel inward through all the individual and collective sufferings, joys, struggles, discoveries, changes that have brought us to this present time; through all the history and all the choices that have separated us and divided us and broken us, and all the choices that have bound us together, healed us, made us one. We journey back to a common source, back through all the ages of history; back through the birth of human consciousness and the birth of the human; back through the birth of life and the birth of the planet; back to the origins of the universe to the startling moment when the universe was charged to Become; back into the eye of God; back into divine love.

The inward journey is a journey of death and rebirth. It requires us to die to ego attachments. It confronts us with our personal and collective sin history as well as our grace history. We are confronted with our responsibility for the state of our soul and the state of our world. We are forced to travel through the hell we have created within and around us. We are the oppressors and the oppressed. We are the one who has destroyed, crippled or straitjacketed our own creative capacities; our potential to become more fully human. We are the one who has broken the community; the one who has refused food to the hungry and drink to the thirsty. We are the one who has violated the earth and violated our neighbor. We are the one who has delivered holocausts and genocides, torture and death. We are the one who has cut ourselves off from love.

It is a journey that if pursued humbly and honestly to the deepest part of our being brings us to the dark tomb of self-knowledge and death which is also the dark womb of spiritual re-birth. It is the place where, having confessed our participation in the world's sin history, we discover our participation in grace history; in the Buddha nature; the Christ nature; the Tao; where we discover our existence in divine love; where we are re-conceived in the knowledge that we are called to love, to divine compassion, to fulfillment, to life;

where we discover that all we need for our personal journey and our whole earth journey has already been given to us; that from the beginning we have been blessed. It is where we discover that we are sacred beings.

II. Outward Journey: Discovering theSacred in the World;

The Great Compassion

Paradoxically, the more deeply inward we go and the more we live in deep awareness of our own sacred center and source, the more universal we become; the more we grow in awareness of our deep unity with all peoples. The joys and sufferings of the world's peoples are *our* joys and sufferings. *We are* part of one humanity. The struggles and hopes of the world's people are *our* struggles and hopes. Their loss is *our* loss. Their discovery and growth is our discovery and growth.

The more we grow in awareness of our own sacred source, the more we discover that our own sacred source is the sacred source of each person and all that is in the universe. In God, all are sacred. All 4.5 billion persons on the planet are sacred. All are loved by God, including those we consider our enemies. (Thus Christ said, "Love your enemies. Do good to those who hate you.")

A truly global spirituality recognizes that God's love and sacred presence is manifested in diverse and wonderful ways everywhere around the planet, in all cultures, nations, beliefs. A global spirituality respects diversity. It seeks to discover truth, beauty and goodness in many different cultural manifestations. It recognizes the sacred in the wisdom and experience of all the world's cultures and traditions: Hinduism, Buddhism, Islam, Judaism, Christianity, tribal religions.

A new world order will be nurtured in the universal extensions of love, compassion, justice and peace. All of the world's great saints manifested this universal compassion. Gandhi, Mother Theresa, Dorothy Day, Martin Luther King are contemporary examples. Christ was a model of universal compassion. He stood with the sinners, the crippled, the lepers, the "foreigners," the poor, the hungry, the women, the humble fisherfolk. All these were in one way or another the "untouchables" of society, those living on the underside of dominance. And He witnessed that all were important, all were sacred. Were not all one in one Father; all branches of one Vine; members of one Body, sharing life in One Spirit?

Christ's universal compassion emerged from a profound awareness and life in the Spirit. It involved being and doing; contemplation and action. This compassionate love was defined in words and deeds: in the Beatitudes; in the command to feed the hungry and give drink to the thirsty; in the command to forgive the enemy; in the parable of the Samaritan and the encounter with the Samaritan woman — where cultural and national divisions are transcended in awareness of shared humanness; in the imagery of the banquet to which all are invited; in the central image of one loving, forgiving Father; in the vision of the Kingdom of God which is to be realized within ourselves and in our relationships with others. And in taking on the human condition with full compassion; giving His life so that the world would learn how to love and how to recognize the sacredness of life.

Forgiveness

The first step in the outward spiritual journey, in the healing of the planetary community and creation of a new world order, may be learning to forgive and to seek forgiveness. Universal love, compassion, justice and peace are not possible without a recognition of our mutual responsibility for the brokenness of the world community and our capacity to heal that brokenness. We each have hurt and have been hurt by others; we have broken trust with one another. We can each help heal the past.

This is true of nations as well as individuals. Perhaps the arms race is escalating to dangerous heights because as nations we are too proud to say we are sorry. It may be that as a first step to world peace, the people of the U.S. should ask forgiveness of the Japanese for dropping atomic bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki; and to learn to forgive the Japanese for the bombing of Pearl Harbor. It may be that the people of Japan need to ask forgiveness from the Koreans and Chinese for their past invasions and brutal occupation; that the Germans need to ask forgiveness for the genocide of six million Jews and their invasions in Europe; that the Soviets need to seek forgiveness for their transgressions in Afghanistan and Eastern Europe. Each nation has a history which needs to be healed before we can build a healthy world community together. Learning to seek and grant forgiveness between national societies is an important part of the outward spiritual journey; a part of national ego transcendence needed for a more *human* world order.

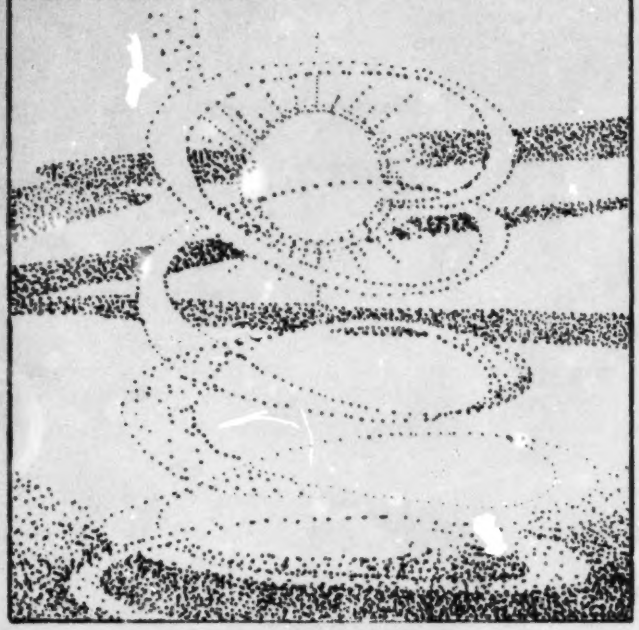
A Spirituality of the Earth

Any spirituality deep and large enough for this new global age also needs to include a profound sense of our common dependency on the earth. We are not *over* the earth. We are *part of* the earth processes. We will live and die as the earth lives and dies.[10] And any authentic global spirituality will also have a profound sense of the divine consciousness that informs every species and every atom of the earth and universe. When a whole plant or animal species is destroyed, a part of God, a part of ourselves, a part of the Buddha nature, a part of the universe is silenced and lost forever. Even God cannot bring it back.

Everything that is on earth comprises our human nature. If we lose any part of the earth, we lose part of our nature. This is true in the physical/material sense. Our bodies are made up of the earth elements in the same proportion as they exist in the earth. It is also true in a spiritual sense. To lose a rainbow, to lose the flowers, to lose a plant or animal species is to lose an important part of our experience. If we lived on a desolate place like the moon, human nature would also be desolate.[11]

A *world* order is more than just a *human* order. It is an order in which humans learn to bring their lives into communion with the earth processes — material, plant, animal — of which we are an interdependent part. A global spirituality rejects the dualism between spirit and matter, between soul and body, between human and non-human. An authentic global spirituality recognizes what the Native Americans recognized when they spoke of a *united planet of nations* in

A spiritual journey is not made on a straight road . . . it is a spiral that travels inward, outward and forward.



which the *human* nation needs to live in right relationship with the *tree* nation, the *water* nation, the *bird* nation, the *buffalo* nation, etc.[13]

Our Shinto and Buddhist and Hindu and Taoist and tribal African and Native American ancestors intuitively understood the divine presence in the earth processes and our spiritual kinship with all life forms. Thus when Chief Seattle, leader of the Native American Suquamish tribe was asked to sell tribal lands to the U.S. government in 1854, he responded:

How can you buy or sell the sky, the warmth of the land? The idea is strange to us.

We are part of the earth and it is part of us. The perfumed flowers are our sisters; the deer, the horse, the great eagle, these are our brothers. The rocky crests, the juices in the meadows, the body heat of the pony, and man — all belong to the same family.

If we sell you our land . . . teach your children what we have taught our children, that the earth is our mother. Whatever befalls the earth, befalls the sons of the earth. If men spit upon the ground they spit upon themselves.

This we know. The earth does not belong to man; man belongs to the earth. This we know. All things are connected like the blood which unites one family. All things are connected.

Whatever befalls the earth befalls the sons of the earth. Man did not weave the web of life; he is merely a strand in it. Whatever he does to the web, he does to himself.[13]

Thus, too, these lessons from Zen Buddhism:

Once when Joshu was still with Nansen, Nansen took an ox into the Monk's Hall, and led him around. The head monk whacked the ox on the back three times, and Nansen took a sheaf of grass and put it in front of the head monk, who said nothing.

Has an ox the Buddha Nature?
Had the head monk the ox nature?[14]

Rain, hail, snow and ice
are divided from one another;
But after they fall,
They are the same water
of the stream in the valley.[15]

Thus also in Taoism:

"The universe came into being
with us together; with us, all
things are one."[16]

We need to relocate the deep awareness our tribal ancestors had of the sacredness of the earth and all its living parts; their sense of oneness and interdependence with the earth and each other.

This does not mean going back to the past. We cannot go back. The world of today is far too complex for that. But we must bring the best insights of the world's spiritual traditions forward into our new global context and add to these a new spiritual inquiry appropriate to our times. Even in this more complex, modern world we must come to see how we are bound together; and what we do to the earth and to each other we do to ourselves. We live and die as the earth lives and dies. We live and die as our brothers and sisters live and die.

Unity of Life

The world has long been divided by the external differences between religious belief systems. Bitter and bloody wars have been fought over these differences. But in the inner or mystical vision of all the authentic religions has been the universal discovery that all are bound together in one life force. In fact the English word *religion* is derived from the Latin *religare*, meaning "to bind together; to make whole; harmony." In Sanskrit one of the original meanings of *dharma* (external religion) is the same: "to bind together as one the whole universe."

The discovery and affirmation of the unity of all in one Spirit, one sacred source and divine consciousness, is a recurrent theme not only in tribal spirituality and the Eastern religions, but also in the mystical streams of Judaism, Christianity and Islam. It is central in Sufi and Baha'i spirituality which grew out of Islam. It is the essence of Christ's teachings:

— *"That all may be one as I and the Father are One"*

— *"Love one another as I have loved you"*

— *"I am the vine, and you are the branches"*

The old separations were only separations of the mind. The deeper reality is our oneness in one God, one earth, one life, one nature. To understand this is to understand the basic message of authentic religion but it is also to understand (stand in) the basic truth of the universe. It is to *stand in* the deepest truth of existence — that we are all part of one life on one planet that is itself part of one cosmic creational event. What happens to the earth and to the "other" happens to ourselves.

To *stand in* this awareness is the deepest mode of knowing because it is knowing in the sense of seeing/doing. It demands that one's life be lived in accord with the knowledge of one's essential unity with all life.

Science and Spirituality

If traditional religions and Marxism have lost sight of this basic spiritual truth, it is now science that is helping us rediscover it. This is ironic because in its commitment to empirical discovery and verification of truths about the world, scientists have often dismissed the more intuitive knowledge and insights from earlier religious inquiry.

Nevertheless, and despite its near exclusive focus on physical reality and the exclusion of religious questions, it is now scientific inquiry that is verifying the seminal insights of spiritual inquiry. Scientists are exploring the smallest particles of matter and the far reaches of space and beginning to discover empirically what spiritual visionaries have known intuitively. The universe is one. All is interrelated and bound together. The universe is charged with a marvellous intelligence and inner cosmic laws that guide its intimate workings on micro and macro levels, from the smallest cells with electrons, neutrons and protons functioning in patterns of dynamic communion to the solar systems and galaxies moving in cosmic communion and interdependence.

Our astronauts go into space as technicians. Some come back as mystics. From the darkness of space they have seen the earth in a new way. This new vision of the earth as a subsystem of one minor solar system in a remote galaxy of a vast cosmos brings with it a new humility. We are not so powerful after all. We did not create the Earth. We are not the masters. We are not *over* the earth but are part of this single cell we call Earth. "We will live or die as this cell lives or dies."[17]

There is an existential loneliness that comes from our sojourn in space. We do not know whether there is life as we know it on any other planet. Our planet may be a singular life-supporting cell among the billions of planets and solar systems in the galaxies. This loneliness is *awe-filling*. We are filled with dread at the possible emptiness and silence of the universe and also filled with awe at the possible, yet unknown, fullness we may discover.

Through our scientists we have gone into the remote and silent space where the gods were once thought to dwell with the expectation of claiming it for our own. For some, in that dark stillness a powerful, ultimate presence is felt that is beyond knowing. We have returned to Earth with the new but old knowledge of the indwelling presence of the sacred. And we are discovering that the God of the Cosmos is also still immanent on earth, having never really left. It was only we who could no longer see or hear or know that presence because of our aberrations. But we are coming to know again, as our tribal ancestors knew, that this is the planet of the indwelling God, a sacred place where the Spirit of Life is working a new creation, a new genesis.

III. New Genesis: The Forward Journey

The vision and story of the cosmos that has emerged from scientific inquiry is, in Thomas Berry's view, the most profoundly revelatory experience of humankind since the emergence of the great religions. In its corrected, integrated version, "this story constitutes the basic hope for a viable future for the human community and for the planet earth." Once this cosmological myth is given its integral expression as a "numinous/spiritual as well as a mechanistic/physical" process, then the human community has a foundation on which to proceed in creating a new human order:

> *World order is a product of the world process. In its human phase world order is a continuation of the cosmic/earth process. The "order" involved is not the order of an abiding image of eternity such as that presented by Plato . . . but the order of a universe and a human community that is coming into being. This sense that the human order is a continuation and participation in an emerging world process is primary in our discussion. There is not, and never has been, an established world order. There is only the world genesis. a cosmogenesis, biogenesis, anthropogenesis.*[18]

The forward journey begins with the recognition that the present order, however dark, however dangerous, however polarized, is not the last word. Human genesis, like the cosmogenesis of which it is a part, is still in process. We have not finished our journey. We are unfinished humans and unfinished communities. There are no developed nations. We are all developing nations, part of a developing world community. We are called to grow, to become more.

Struggle, Pain, Hope: The Becoming Human

The forward spiritual journey is the struggle toward the not yet but the possible human and the possible human community. It is the journey of the becoming human and the becoming human community. It is conscious participation in ongoing genesis.

The outward journey: the authentic recognition of God's love for the world; real compassion; leads to engagement in the world, to struggle, to action to suffering, to vulnerability to growth. Without vulnerability and struggle we cannot grow, we cannot create, we cannot go forward.

A truly new human order will be created in the meeting ground between contemplation and struggle, reflection and action. The personal spiritual journey takes on meaning and purpose when we struggle to find an adequate response to the real life and death questions which life puts before us. As Victor Frankl noted in *Man's Search for Meaning*, we find

meaning or fulfillment not when we seek our own spiritual realization, but when we transcend ourselves in response to the larger questions which history constantly puts before us.

He made the following observations about the brutal experience he and others suffered in a Nazi concentration camp, when many were tempted to surrender their will to life:

> *What was really needed was a fundamental change in our attitude toward life. We had to learn that ourselves and furthermore, we had to teach despairing men that it did not really matter what we expected from life, but rather what life expected from us. We needed to stop asking about the meaning of life, and instead to think of ourselves as those who were being questioned by life — daily and hourly. Our answer must consist, not in talk and meditation, but in right action and in right conduct. Life ultimately means taking the responsibility to find the right answers to its problems and to fulfill the tasks which it constantly sets for each individual . . .*[19]

He also wrote:

> *By declaring that man is a responsible creature and must actualize the potential meaning of his life, I wish to stress that the true meaning of life is to be found in the world rather than within man or his own psyche, as though it were a closed system. By the same token, the real aim of human existence cannot be found in what is called self-actualization. Human existence is essentially self-transcendence rather than self-actualization. Self-actualization is not a possible aim at all, for the simple reason that the more a man would strive for it, the more he would miss it. For only to the extent to which man commits himself to the fulfillment of his life's meaning, to this extent he also actualizes himself. In other words, self-actualization cannot be attained if it is made an end in itself, but only as a side effect of self-transcendence.*[20]

What a desperate collection of men recognized and asked of themselves in the shadows of the gas chambers and mass extermination, we who live today in the shadow of nuclear genocide need to ask ourselves: "What is life asking of us?"

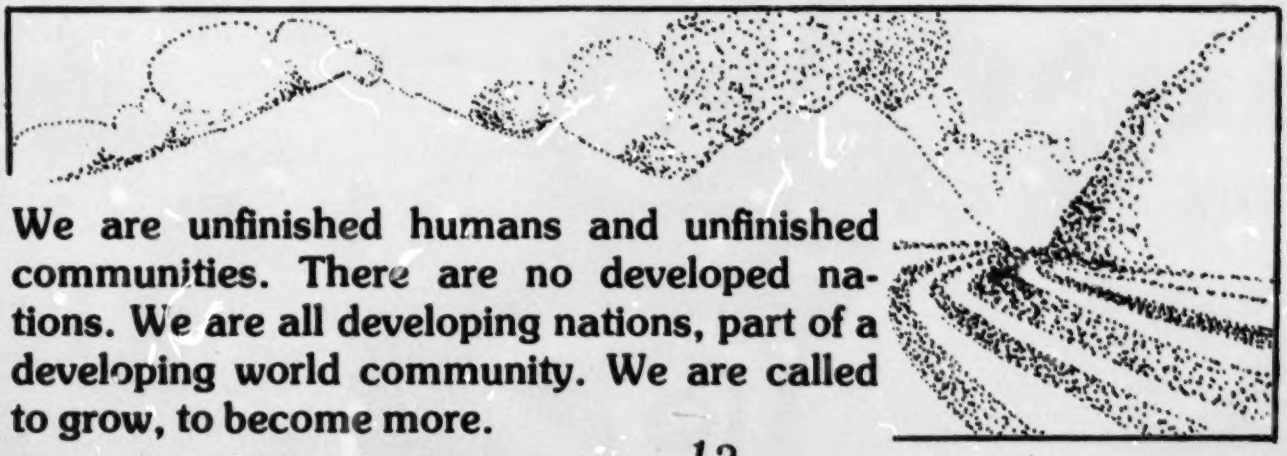
Today life is putting before us some very critical questions. They are life and death questions. They are not being adequately addressed in any national or international political forum. But they remain to haunt us all the same, crying out for some form of adequate response.

Around the earth, young people are picking up the call and feeling anguish about their uncertain future. We have already referred to the despair felt by those who experience powerlessness in the face of the enormity and complexity of the issues today. We stand here at this time and space, at a place in history where we are personally and collectively being asked to respond to life and death questions about the future of humanity; when we are faced with anti-creational or creational choices; when we are being asked to consciously participate in ongoing creation, in creating a new human order, a new genesis. And we look at ourselves and ask, "Who are we? Are we capable of the psychological, spiritual, mythic growth required for the next stage of our journey? Are we capable of becoming and living as *world* community?"

While some scientists have been exploring outer space, others have been exploring the inner space of the human psyche and soul, the inner reaches of human nature. They have also been doing brain and mind research, understanding the different functions of right and left brain hemispheres and the human capacity for both intuitive and rational modes of knowing. They have been discovering that we have vast untapped potential; that we haven't begun to reach the limits of our mental, psychic, spiritual capacities; that we may still be in an early stage of our evolution. We are still in a process of *becoming human*. And we are still in the process of becoming human *community*.

The work of psychologist Abraham Maslow[19] is especially relevant to the image of *The Becoming Human*. It is an image which, in Maslow's vision, is inseparable from an image of *The Becoming World Community*.

Maslow describes human potentialities in terms of inherent human needs and capacities that include not only *Basic* needs (food, shelter, security, belonging, affection, esteem) but also meta or *Being needs*. The Being needs/values include a long list of about 40 attributes such as Justice, Peace, Love, Unity, Beauty, Truth, Goodness, Sim-



We are unfinished humans and unfinished communities. There are no developed nations. We are all developing nations, part of a developing world community. We are called to grow, to become more.

plicity, Joy, Playfulness. These are not abstract ideals remote from human possibility. They are part of the inherent ground of our being without which we feel incomplete, deprived, not fully human.

These Being needs are also the words which, through centuries of spiritual search, people in different cultures have come to use to describe God, the Buddha nature, the Christ nature, Atman, the divine. In its essence, seeking human completeness, the search to become fully human, is the search for the indwelling God in us, for becoming more God-like. The Being needs/values pull us forward in search of their realization, even as a tree struggles upward in search of light. From the beginning we have been coded to seek our realization in this way; the realization of our personal potential and also our collective human potential. Our potential being, our potential humanity pulls us forward toward its realization.

Justice, peace, community are not easily achievable, but they are not something apart from our nature. They are part of our calling in history — the not yet which struggles to Become; the working ground for and through which we are called to shape our personal and planetary future.

Maslow says that the instinct to become fully human is not strong in us. We do not automatically realize our potential. We are much more vulnerable than animals. The great tragedy of human existence is that so many finish their lives without realizing their full potential. He felt that the "actualization of the highest human potentials is possible — on a mass basis — only under 'good' conditions; that we need a good society in which to grow." By "good society" he said he meant "one species, one world."

Like Frankl, Maslow concluded that self-realization is not attainable as an end in itself. Only through self-transcendence, through responding to issues larger than self do we become fully human. In a sense we can look at the issues history is putting before us and say with Christopher Fry, "Thank God we live in times when problems are soul sized," when so much is demanded of us, when we are challenged to stretch ourselves and become more.

Maslow saw the long range goal as world peace through one world, one law.[20] For him the development of the fully human person and the development of world order were inseparable from each other. He put it this way:

> *There is a kind of feedback between the Good Society and the Good Person. They need each other, they are sine qua non to each other. I wave aside the problem of which comes first. It is quite clear that they develop simultaneously and in tandem. It would in any case be impossible to achieve either one without the other. By Good Society I mean ultimately one species, one world.*[21]

A more just and peaceful world order can be viewed as a necessary *pre-condition* for the full flowering of the human person and the full flowering of an authentic, lived spirituality. It can also be viewed as the natural *outcome* of the human search for completion and fulfillment, of an authentic spirituality.

For Maslow the far goal was world peace through world law. For Sri Aurobindo, the Indian mystic and philosopher who was a spiritual force in India's struggle for independence, a world political order or world government was a necessary step in the larger spiritual journey of the human community. The far goal he saw was spiritual union; a spiritual order. But he saw political unification as an essential middle step that could not be separated from or skipped over in the longer spiritual journey.[22]

What Kind of World Order?

Whether we consider the far goal as spiritual union or as full human realization in a context of world peace through world law, we who live now are faced with some immediate problems that challenge human survival and the future of our children and grandchildren. We are still en route. We still have a long way to go to a world order of Maslow's or Sri Aurobindo's vision. Meanwhile, a new order is already developing. This new order could be a dangerous order. It could also be a positive step forward.

The question is not *whether* there will be a new human order. It is rather, *what kind* of order? What values and world-views will it be built on? Will it be a world order based on power and domination over the earth and each other? Will it serve a few at the expense of the many? Will its successive stages lead to increasing hunger, war, deprivation and dehumanization? Will it be an order where increasing wealth flows into the hands of a few? Or will we decide to journey on a path toward a world order that serves all humanity as a whole? Will it be a liberating and humanizing world order? Will it help us become more fully human and more fully human community?

Deeply spiritual persons experience the suffering in the world as their own suffering. The world is not something apart from them. Their skin is not a dividing membrane that separates them from the world but a permeable membrane, through which events of the world and events of their inner life flow into one another.

The answer to these questions will depend upon the quality and values of people on the journey and on the quality of their spirituality. Who will be involved in the formulation and decision-making process for a new world order? Will they include men and women rooted in a global and creational spirituality? In a spirituality that is conscious, courageous, humble and bold enough to guide and support us in becoming co-creational with the Spirit of History in the work of building the earth?

We live in a certain fullness of time. All of the great spiritual visionaries of the past have seen the oneness of life — a dynamic world order — beneath the surface evidence of brokenness. But never before in history has the vision "that all may be one" been a practical possibility in the human *social* order. Now, for the first time in history, we have the global transportation, communications, and economic infrastructure that make human community on a global scale a practical possibility. Now, for the first time in history, we know how many we are on the planet, what our languages are, how we are alike and different. Now we know through our explorations in space, our explorations of the earth's biosphere, our explorations of the limits and possibilities of our one planetary homeland, how mutually dependent we are on the earth and on each other for our future survival.

It is a time in history, therefore, when the call to world justice, peace and unity takes on special significance. We who live in this time are given a special mission to forward a more human world order. We are challenged to do this within ourselves in deepened consciousness of our mutual dependence and in deepened consciousness of the earth. And we are challenged also to forward our mutual survival and well being through the development of a world social political order of greater justice and peace.

An Interdependent God

But there is no guarantee that a more human, just and peaceful world community will be developed. We live in an interdependent world. The God of this world is an *Interdependent God:* a God who acts through us; who depends on us; who depends on our willingness to help create the future; our willingness to take on the critical questions of history and to be conscious participants in the ongoing world genesis.

We live at a critical crossroads in history. All of history has been leading to the present moment of decision. All of our separate past histories now converge in one shared future history. There always has been a world order from the beginning of the creational journey. Only we in our blindness didn't recognize it. We set up divisions and boundaries. We lost sight of the sacredness of ourselves and all creation. Now we are being called to die to our old divisions, to heal our brokenness, to build the planet of God as a sacred planet where God's love is more fully manifest.

To do this requires a deep spirituality. A deep relationship with God. Otherwise we will give up hope. The deeply spiritual person sees the suffering in the world and takes on that suffering as Christ took it on. This is possible only when we live in hope. Otherwise the suffering could not be endured. It would lead to cynicism and despair. It would kill the spirit and the capacity to create.

Deeply spiritual persons experience the suffering in the world as their own suffering. The world is not something apart from them. Their skin is not a dividing membrane that separates them from the world but a connecting membrane, a permeable membrane, through which events of the world and events of their inner life flow into one another.

They suffer with the world. But they do not become obsessed by their suffering and the world's suffering. They do not let it overtake them and destroy their spirit, their ability to choose life. To live deeply in the Spirit is to be able to see beyond the immediate evidence of brokenness and suffering. It is to be able to imagine alternatives. It is to seek the not yet, but possible future. To live deeply in the Spirit is to find the courage to create in the midst of darkness; the faith to plant seeds in the dark ground of our times so that new life can flourish in the future.

Rubem Alves, the Brazilian author of *Tomorrow's Child,* has this to say about hope and suffering and the creative act:

> *What is hope? It is the presentiment that imagination is more real and reality less real than it looks. It is the hunch that the overwhelming brutality of facts that oppress and repress is not the last word. It is the suspicion that Reality is more complex than realism wants us to believe; that the frontiers of the possible are not determined by the limits of the actual, and that in a miraculous and unexpected way, life is preparing the creative events which will open the way to freedom and resurrection . . .*
>
> *The two, suffering and hope, live from each other. Suffering without hope, produces resentment and de-*

spair. Hope without suffering creates illusions, naivete and drunkenness . . .

Let us plant dates, even though those who plant them will never eat them . . . We must live by the love of what we will never see. This is the secret discipline. It is a refusal to let the creative act be dissolved away in immediate sense experience, and a stubborn commitment to the future of our grandchildren. Such disciplined love is what has given prophets, revolutionaries and saints the courage to die for the future they envisaged. They make their own bodies the seed of their highest hope.[23]

We must be far-sighted enough to plant seeds now toward a new Genesis so that our descendents will look back on us as ancestors who brought honor and life to them and the planetary community. We must be willing to bring whatever talents, skills, insights we have toward a new genesis in the human community; one along the direction Robert Muller, Secretary of the U.N. ECOSOC, points to in "New Genesis," printed on the next page. We must see and act on the knowledge that we are co-creational beings, and that, while the whole responsibility for the whole future of the world does not rest on any one person's shoulders, we each have a unique task to do in forwarding a more human world order that no one else can do for us. It is in discovering that task and taking it on in community with others that our life finds its meaning and that the world finds its direction and a basis for hope.

Everything we need to make a successful journey into the future is already available to us. We only need to have the courage to plumb our own depths and discover there the indwelling God who abides in us and in the world, calling us to *Become*. ■

FOOTNOTES

[1]For more information on the carbon dioxode threat see *Global 2000: Report to the President of the U.S.* (Pergamon Press, 1980). The over-consumption of fossil fuels produces excessive amounts of carbon dioxide. If this continues and we continue deforestation trends so that the carbon dioxide is not held in balance through the production of sufficient oxygen, we can expect a global greenhouse effect. The earth's temperature would increase and produce a melting of polar ice caps and climatic changes.

[2]*Ibid.*

[3]Excellent documentation on the dangers from the nuclear arms race can be found in the following sources:

Center for Defense Information, 600 Maryland Ave. SW, Washington, D.C.

Physicians for Social Responsibility, P.O. Box 144, Watertown, MA 02172.

Ruth Sivard, *World Military and Social Expenditures*, available from World Priorities, Inc., Box 1003, Leesburg, VA 20075.

[4]Elsewhere I have written more on the despair syndrome among young people. See: Patricia Mische, "Young People and SALT II," *America* (Dec. 1979) and Patricia Mische, "The Nuclear Threat and Young People," *The Parents Guide to Teenagers*, ed. by Leonard H. Gross, (New York: MacMillan, 1981).

[5]For example, see the study by Charles E. Sherman and Jeanne B. Morris, "Twenty-Year Countdown: Attitudes of Teachers about the Future." (Report of Study done of public school teachers in the State of Illinois in 1979.)

[6]In his book *Stable Peace*, Kenneth Boulding discusses the need for a strength/stress equation to maintain a stable peace. I am applying the equation here to the personal, psycho-spiritual realm.

[7]Jean Houston, "Prometheus Rebound: An Inquiry Into Technological Growth and Psychological Change," in *Technological Forecasting and Social Change*, 9, 241-258 (1976).

[8]Matthew Fox, *A Spirituality Named Compassion and the Healing of the Global Village, Humpty Dumpty and Us.* (Minneapolis, MN: Winston Press, 1979).

[9]Sr. Donald Corcoran, in a lecture given at the Global Education Associates Institute, Stony Point, New York, August, 1981.

[10]Thomas Berry, "The Ecological Age," *The Whole Earth Papers*, No. 12 (1979), Global Education Associates.

[11]Thomas Berry, in a presentation made at Seton Hall University, October, 1981.

[12]*Ibid.*

[13]The full text of Chief Seattle's speech is printed in a number of sources, one of which is *Power to the People: Active Nonviolence in the U.S.* (Culver City, CA: Peace Press, 1977).

[14]From *Zen and Zen Classics: Selections from R.H. Blyth*, compiled and with drawings by Frederick Franck, (New York: Vintage Press, 1978), p. 63.

[15]*Ibid.*, p. 141.

[16]As quoted in Alan Watts, *Tao: The Watercourse Way*, (New York: Pantheon Books, 1975).

[17]Thomas Berry, "Ecological Age," op. cit.

[18]Thomas Berry, "Contemplation and World Order," in *Christian Voices*, a special edition of *The Whole Earth Papers*, No. 10 (1978), Global Education Associates.

[19]Abraham Maslow, *The Farther Reaches of Human Nature*, (Harper and Brothers, 1954, revised ed., 1970), and Maslow, *Toward a Psychology of Being*, (Van Norstrand, 1962).

[20]Abraham Maslow, "Politics 3," *Journal of Humanistic Psychology*.

[21]Abraham Maslow, *The Farther Reaches of Human Nature*, op. cit., p. 19.

[22]Sri Aurobindo, *The Future Evolution of Man*, (Wheaton, IL: Theosophical Publishing House, 1974), and *Human Cycle, Ideal of Human Unity*, (New York: International Publishers Service, 1971). See also, A.B. Patel, *Toward a New World Order*, (Pondicherry, India: World Union International, 1974). Mr. Patel builds on the thought of Sri Aurobindo and looks at both the spiritual and global political implications for world order of Aurobindo's thought.

[23]Rubem Alves, *Tomorrow's Child*, (New York: Harper and Row, 1972).

[24]Robert Muller, from the Epilogue to *Global Spirituality* (forthcoming — Doubleday, 1982).

The New Genesis

By Robert Muller

And God saw that all nations of the Earth, black and white, poor and rich, from North and South, from East and West, and of all creeds were sending their emissaries to a tall glass house on the shores of the River of the Rising Sun, on the island of Manhattan, to study together, to think together and to care together for the world and all its people.

And God said: that is good.
And it was the first day of the New Age of the Earth.

And God saw that soldiers of peace were separating the combatants of quarrelling nations, that differences were being resolved by negotiation and reason instead of arms, and that the leaders of nations were seeing each other, talking to each other and joining their hearts, minds, souls and strength for the benefit of all humanity.

And God said: that is good.
And it was the second day of the Planet of Peace.

And God saw that humans were loving the whole Creation, the stars and the sun, the day and the night, the air and the oceans, the earth and the waters, the fishes and the fowl, the flowers and the herbs, and all their human brethren and sisters.

And God said: that is good.
And it was the third day of the Happy Planet.

And God saw that humans were suppressing hunger, disease, ignorance and suffering all over the globe, providing each human person with decent, conscious and happy life, and reducing the greed, the power and the wealth of the few.

And God said: that is good.
And it was the fourth day of the Planet of Justice.

And God saw that humans were living in harmony with their planet and in peace with one another, wisely managing their resources, avoiding waste, curbing excesses, replacing hatred with love, greed with contentment, arrogance with humility, division with cooperation, and mistrust with understanding.

And God said: that is good.
And it was the fifth day of the Golden Planet.

And God saw that people were destroying their arms, bombs, missiles, warships and warplanes, dismantling their bases and disbanding their armies, keeping only policemen of peace to protect the good from the bad and the normal from the mad.

And God said: that is good.
And it was the sixth day of the Planet of Reason.

And God saw humans restore God and the human person as the Alpha and Omega, reducing institutions, beliefs, politics, governments and all human entities to mere servants of God and the people. And God saw them adopt as their supreme law: "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, all your soul, all your mind and all your strength. You shall love your neighbor as yourself. There is no greater commandment than these."

And God said: that is good.
And it was the seventh day of the Planet of God.

Since 1948, ROBERT MULLER has given service to the United Nations. At the present time, he is Secretary of the UN Economic and Social Council. His sphere of activity covers an extensive range of issues from political affairs to the environment and natural disasters, from space communication to water problems, from solar energy to biology and art. His book, Most of All, They Taught Me Happiness, was published by Doubleday in 1978. This selection is excerpted with permission from the epilogue to his forthcoming book, Global Spirituality (Doubleday, 1982).

SCIENCE AND THE CLARIFICATION OF VALUES:

Implications of Recent Findings in Psychological and Psychic Research

BY WILLIS HARMAN

WILLIS HARMAN has been a Futurist at Stanford Research Institute (now SRI International) for over 14 years, focusing on interpretation of contemporary cultural and social change. He is also, since 1977, President of the Institute of Noetic Sciences, founded by astronaut Edgar Mitchell to foster development of a science of human consciousness. He has been a faculty member of Stanford's School of Engineering for 30 years, and was recently appointed a member of the Board of Regents of the University of California. His book An Incomplete Guide to the Future (W.W. Norton, 1979) is both a personal statement and an interpretation of the present moment in history. This article appeared in the Journal of Humanistic Psychology and is excerpted with the author's permission.

Modern industrial society appears to be extraordinarily confused about values. With ever-increasing technological "know-how," it seems to be most unsure of what is ultimately worth doing. Having lost sight of more fundamental goals, it tends to guide decisions by such pseudo-goals as GNP and earnings per share — good measures of achievement of societal goals.

Contributing to this confusion has been the belief, once widely taught, that science does not inform about values. Since in the public mind science is now generally equated with knowledge, this belief led to moral relativism if not nihilism. Yet all the while it must have been apparent that the health sciences, for example, deal very profoundly with value issues. Consider for example, the mounting evidence that certain attitudes (e.g., resentment, frustration, rage, anxiety) are unwholesome in that they tend to foster peptic ulcers, cancer, and other illness. Other attitudes (e.g., humor, joy, love) promote wellness and healing. But attitudes are intimately related to beliefs. Thus some beliefs (about oneself, one's relationship to others and to the planet) are wholesome while other beliefs are unwholesome. Some beliefs strongly fostered by modern industrial society are distinctly unwholesome; think, for instance, of the beliefs that underlie stress or feelings of alienation. Thus we are led to conclude that while science may not have seemed to deal directly with values, the sciences relating to health and human development have the most profound value implications.

In the following discussion I want to examine some rather startling implications of recent findings in psychological and psychic research which suggest we are at the threshold of a new and deeper public understanding of the origins of human values.

Three Kinds of Knowledge

One of the most puzzling aspects of modern scientific knowledge is its selective inattention to human consciousness. This is in contrast to most traditional societies which have given a place of central importance to knowledge about the experience of conscious awareness, including intimations of "behind-the-scenes" unconscious processes. All societies, ancient or modern, primitive or sophisticated, have guided themselves by values and goals rooted in the experiences of "deep intuition" as reported by shamans, prophets, poets, and mystics, or in some visionary cultures as explored by the entire adult (male) population.

The apparent paradox that the very knowledge of consciousness which might be of greatest help in making the fateful choices before us is most neglected. The France Culture program of Radio France, in October of 1979, sponsored a week-long international colloquium of scientists from diverse disciplines from neuropsychiatry to cultural anthropology to parapsychology, to discuss this puzzle: How does it happen we know so much science and know so little about consciousness? There are methodological difficulties to be sure, but they fail to explain fully the positivistic bias of scientific knowledge. We have all had a good laugh over the story of the drunk who had lost his housekey in a dark alley and was looking for it under a streetlight, "because the light is better here." Scientific research has been looking largely "where the light is better" — where the knowledge sought can be measured and quantified. The area of subjective experience has been relatively neglected. The reasons have partly to do with the cultural preoccupations of industrializing society, and partly with the ambivalence which always accompanies exploration of the inner mysteries; as Maslow put it, "the need to know and the fear of knowing."

Some light is shed on this puzzle by examining the relationship between the intended use of a body of knowledge

and the form that knowledge assumes. Imagine, if you will, the kind of knowledge systems that might evolve in three hypothetical societies in which the predominant emphases are on, respectively, knowledge for *prediction and control*, knowledge *to guide human development*, and the *search for meaning*. The characteristics might be summarized in Table 1.

These purposes overlap of course, and industrial society has developed some knowledge of all three types. However, the prediction-and-control knowledge has come to be clearly predominant, mainly because it is the form most useful for generating new technologies and the ability to control the physical environment, virtues highly valued during the industrializing period. In the process, the other two kinds of knowledge have tended to be treated as inferior or unimportant. Purpose and meaning are not concepts that refer directly to things that are physical and measurable. They are awkward for contemporary science to deal with, and knowledge relating to them has been typically considered to be non-science and relegated to the humanities and to religion. There has often been the added implication that such knowledge, not being scientific, must be either illusory or unimportant, and probably isn't deserving of the title "knowledge." If it is non-science it must be nonsense.

TABLE 1. A Comparison of Three Types of Knowledge Systems

Primary focus	*Applications*	*Characteristics*
Prediction and control	*Develop technologies, manipulate and control the physical environment, develop and produce goods and services*	*Emphasis on measurable information, quantified descriptions, deterministic models, reductionistic explanations*
Human development	*Guide actions relating to human development, education, physical and emotional health, psychotherapy, and counseling*	*Concern with purpose, volition, value issues, teleological explanations, models and metaphors involving holistic concepts, explorations of alternative states of consciousness*
Meaning	*Psychotherapy and counseling, religion*	*Concern with meaning, ultimate goals, alternative states of consciousness, especially "deep intuition"*

This point has been the cause of a great amount of confusion. Surely it is possible to bring together a great deal of knowledge regarding human development, and surely the phenomena of volition and choice play a central role in it. But already it is apparent that the second kind of knowledge differs from the first in several essential particulars. For one thing, volition and choice have no place in the prediction-and-control type of knowledge. They are intrinsically ruled out — either not observed or explained away. We should not then find it surprising that there might be other phenomena as well, such as the effects of attitudes on illness and healing, which appear to be well evidenced phenomena in the second kind of knowledge and seem somehow anomalous in the first.

Second, the prediction-and-control focused science tends to make the implicit assumption of an "objective" observer (with some exceptions such as the observer effect of quantum physics and the placebo effect in medical science). The assumption makes much less sense in knowledge focused on human development, wellness, and search for meaning. Here, self-reports of subjective experience are essential data. For them to be trustworthy data, researchers must recognize the extent to which they are inextricably a part of the inquiry rather than a detached observer. Rather than "objective" experimentation, the ideal is more like mutual exploration in an atmosphere of trust and rapport, by persons dedicated to the search for knowledge but not attached to specific assumptions, theories, and expected outcomes. To put it another way, researchers must allow themselves to be changed by the process of inquiry. We can see examples of this necessity in the professional training of cultural anthropologists and psychotherapists which involve learning to be free from judging a society or another person in terms of internalized cultural preferences, accepted mores, and likes and dislikes.

To build up a body of knowledge useful for guiding human development it would be useful to explore thoroughly the occurrence of exceptional human capacities. The very fact that some individuals choose (at some level, conscious or unconscious) to develop these abilities, while others do not, indicates that this is an area where the concept of reliability of findings as found in prediction-and-control knowledge (i.e., as established by replicable experiments) isn't applicable. It should not be surprising if these exceptional capacities (e.g., extrasensory perception) occur sporadically and in other ways seem in conflict with models of reality constructed from the prediction-and-control emphasis. *There is no reason to expect them to fit the models.* This point needs emphasis because it is contrary to the conventional wisdom.

Four "Tentative" Conclusions

At this point I want to introduce the first of four "tentative conclusions" of psychological and psychic research which together have a great deal to say about modern society's confusion over ultimate values and goals. By "tentative conclusions" I mean simply that they are implied by a large body of accumulated research, yet in some cases at least, the supporting research findings are strongly controversial. In general these conclusions tend to be implied by what has been discovered in pursuit of the second and third kinds of knowledge discussed above, but to appear anomalous in the first kind of knowledge (i.e., the prediction-and-control focused "hard science").

The first of these "tentative conclusions" is in fact quite firmly established:

1. *Ordinary consciousness comprises but a small portion of the total activity of the human mind.* There is an immense array of evidence suggesting that not only do unconscious processes make up by far the greater portion of mental activity, but also that this activity covers a vast spectrum — ranging through autonomic functioning, reflexes, dreaming, psychoanalytic defense mechanisms, habitual behavior, memory search, pattern recognition, conceptualization, "hunches" and intuition, creative imagination, and religious/mystical

awareness. Some of this unconscious activity we know only through inference; some sporadically comes into conscious awareness and we experience it more directly.

The significance of this conclusion is manifested in various ways. Most importantly, (a) *the power of attitudes, beliefs, suggestion, expectation, and imaging to influence perception, behavior, and health, is far greater than is ordinarily assumed.* This statement is supported by results of an immense amount of research in hypnosis, perception, repression, psychotherapy, visual perception, self- and experimenter-expectation, placebo effect, authoritarianism and prejudice, and psychological consequences of cosmetic surgery. We have already noted the relationship between attitudes and health. Equally profound are influences of beliefs on perception. I tend to see what I expect to see, or what it has been suggested to me I will perceive. One part of my mind distorts the perceptions registering in another part of my mind. One part of me hides things from another part, lies to another part. I tend not to see things that would be threatening to deeply held images or in conflict with deeply held beliefs. Thus I really don't know the extent to which what I perceive is a consequence of my own and my culture's expectations and accepted suggestions.

On the other hand, research has convincingly demonstrated that: (b) *unconscious "knowing" is a far more pervasive aspect of experience than is ordinarily taken into account.* In biofeedback training, for example, individuals find that they unconsciously "know" how to dilate capillaries and change blood flow in fingertips to relax muscle tensions causing headaches, to change brainwave patterns and accompanying subjective states. Hypnotic suggestion that a pencil is, instead, a hot soldering iron discloses that the individual "knows" how to produce the physical signs of a burn where the pencil touches. Phenomena of healing suggest that the individual "knows" how to restore damaged tissue, stopping with the appropriate quantity. The phenomenon of repression indicates that the person "knows" how to hide information or distort perceptions that might be disturbing.

(c) *Individual and cultural beliefs about potentialities have a powerful limiting effect, and actual human potentiality is far greater, along many dimensions, than is ordinarily realized.* This statement is supported by studies of awareness, imagination, creativity, empathic understanding and communication; altruistic love; compensatory accomplishments of the handicapped; enhanced performance under hypnosis and in emergency situations; extraordinary specialized abilities (e.g., persons with unusual abilities to detect counterfeit bills, remember long sequences of numbers, display enhanced memory through eidetic imaging); anecdotal accounts of paranormal abilities (e.g., clairvoyant perception, firewalking, dowsing, faith healing, psychokinetic phenomena).

(d) *Associated with various aspects of the phenomenon of repression, individuals and whole cultures are susceptible to self-deception.* The reality perceived is a consequence of the reality believed, as well as the other way around. Anthropologists and psychotherapists alike have emphasized the extent to which the "reality" seen is subjectively shaped and tends to substantiate the picture the perceiver brings to the experience — a picture typically shaped by culture, education, advertising, influential persons, the news media, and interpretations of past experience. Even in science the possibility is present that the questions asked, and the manner in which they are explored, are affected by the cultural surrounding. Discomforting as the thought may be, science as we know it is a cultural artifact of industrial society. In a different culture, science would have different emphases, different favored modes of "explanation," different guiding metaphors; it would describe a different reality.

Take for example the interesting question of how in the evolutionary process we ended up with two eyes and binocular vision. The accepted sort of explanation has tended to speak of things like random mutations, the accidental appearance of an organism with rudimentary binocular vision, natural selection. So, over the course of many generations, we arrive at our present state with two eyes! Although this kind of explanation left a tremendous amount to "accident," it nonetheless was the explanation most students were expected to believe.

Consider another kind of explanation which speaks of some sort of teleological "pull" in the evolutionary process — of evolution toward increased awareness, complexity, freedom — in short, of evolution going somewhere (not in a predetermined sense, but in the sense of preferred direction). In that kind of evolutionary explanation the organism developed two eyes because it wanted to see better! The long path of evolutionary development is not so much pushed by random mutations and natural selection as it is pulled by the kind of teleological force implied in Henri Bergson's *Creative Evolution* and much more forthrightly in Teilhard de Chardin's *The Phenomenon of Man.* In this kind of explanation, mind is prior to brain, and evolution is characterized both by the organism's freedom to choose and by its inner sense of "right" direction. This has been a totally unacceptable form of explanation in much of modern scientific debate. Yet, as we shall see, it is much more in tune with the "perennial wisdom" of the world's religious traditions and much more congenial to the emerging view that consciousness has somehow to be factored into our total scientific picture of the universe.

In a similar vein to accepting the "random mutation" model of our origins, we moderns have striven valiantly to accept as well the "scientific" picture of our own motivations. According to the view of prediction-and-control science our behavior is determined by a combination of genetic predisposition and lifelong conditioning. We only *seem* to choose: the thoughts and feelings which in our conscious awareness appear to be the cause of our actions are instead merely part of the total behavior, and the sense of choosing is illusory. As Bertrand Russell expressed it, "That man is the product of causes which had no prevision of the end they were achieving; that his origin, his growth, his hopes and fears, his loves and beliefs, are but the outcome of accidental collocations of atoms . . . these things, if not quite beyond dispute, are yet so nearly certain, that no philosophy which rejects them can hope to stand." B.F. Skinner (in *Science and Human Behavior)* put the point even more strongly: "Science insists that action is initiated by forces impinging upon the individual, and that freedom is only another name for behavior for which we have not yet found a cause."

The weight of scientific opinion of the first half of the 20th century was to the effect that we should deny the authenticity of our own inner experience and defer to the greater truth of materialistic science. More recently, however, we have seen increasing interest in attempting to complement the exploration of the measurable, physical world with a systematic exploration of consciousness and the unconscious processes. There has been growing recognition of the potential validity of both the inner and outer inquiries and the potentiality of being deceived in either case. We are in the process of shifting from the dictum of Lord Kelvin (that only if you can measure it can you talk about it) to the dictum of the French poet St. Exupery: "Truth is not that which is demonstrable. Truth is that which is *ineluctable*" — that which cannot be escaped.

2. *Mind is not brain.* Mind is not limited in ways implied by models of the physical brain, even quantum-mechanical and holographic ones. The various states of consciousness and their contents are the primary data of human experience. The correspondence between these and states of the human brain complex is only partial.

(a) *Mind is spatially and temporally extended.* The findings of psychic research, particularly those on remote viewing (clairvoyant perception) and on precognition and retrocognition, indicate that effects of mind are not limited by distance or physical time in ways that physicalistic models of mental functioning would suggest. Mind exists in coextensive unity with the world it observes.

(b) *Ultimately mind is predominant over the physical.* This is the dramatic implication of research findings in psychokinesis. Recent work in which the principle of biofeedback is extended to regions outside the physical body (by providing extremely sensitive feedback from remote physical effects) seems to suggest that we all have "unconscious knowledge" of how to influence, by focusing the mind, the physical environment at a distance from the body. In one version of such an experiment, the subject watches an optical interference pattern as he attempts to change the spacing of two parallel faces of a Fabry-Perot interferometer. In other versions he watches sensitive magnetometer readouts as he focuses on changing the magnetic field at the sensor, or sensitive temperature indication as he seeks to raise the temperature at a remote spot.

(c) *Minds are joined.* Recent research on telepathic communication suggests that we have knowledge of what is going on in another mind with whom we are in rapport, even when this knowledge is not accessible to consciousness. (In one such experiment a flashing strobe light stimulus in one person's eyes produces an electrical component in the EEG pattern of another, remote and isolated, who has no conscious awareness of whether the strobe light is flashing or not.) The implication of such research is that individuals' minds are in communication in ways not accounted for by subliminal sounds and visual cues, or any other physical sensory input. The perception of separateness of an individual from other persons (or from the universe) is an illusion.

A third tentative conclusion brings us still closer to the crucial value and goals issues:

3. *The potentialities of creative/intuitive problem solving and choice guidance are far vaster than is ordinarily assumed.* The annals of scientific discovery are replete with anecdotes describing how insight seems to come from some behind-the-scenes creative process, often after the conscious mind has wrestled with a problem and "tried everything," and often when the conscious mind is distracted from the problem — perhaps during a nap or a walk. Business executives, architects, inventors, poets, artists, composers, all have repeatedly told of the creative experience; sometimes in veiled imagery. Sometimes it is visual; sometimes auditory; sometimes simply as a sure inner knowing. The solutions typically not only "feel" right but test out in application.

Even one of the most familiar examples of this particular form of unconscious knowing, namely, memory recall, defies scientific explanation in the usual sense. Let us say I am trying to remember a name I have forgotten. The more I strain the more elusive the name seems to be. Finally I "file a request" with "another part" of my mind to please come up with the name, and go on to think about other things. Then some time later, perhaps in the middle of a conversation on a totally different topic, up pops the name. Unconsciously we know how to search the memory files: consciously we don't know how we do it. The mind that knows I will refer to here as the creative/intuitive mind.

It seems to be true that the more we believe in the abilities of this "other part" of our minds, the more we use it and have faith in it, the better it performs. In fact, it appears that the greatest single obstacle to expanded use of the creative/intuitive mind is lack of consistent belief in its abilities. Various courses and workshops are available to business executives and others who want to increase their access to this creative problem-solving and decision-guiding ability. Most of them are based on autosuggestion and other methods of changing beliefs about the limitations of the creative/intuitive mind.

We have referred earlier to a part of the "unconscious knowing" being knowing how to hide things from myself, which includes hiding the most vital knowledge of my own identity and potentialities. Maslow referred to this deep ambivalence in our minds as the fear of knowing "the godlike in ourselves." In our conscious minds we think we want to see reality as it is and ourselves as we are (i.e., to see truthfully). But the illusions we have are part of an unconsciously held belief system; any attack on those illusions is perceived (unconsciously) as a threat. Thus an effort to dispel illusion, though ultimately beneficial, may nevertheless generate resistance. That resistance may employ the most convincing "scientific" arguments and concepts, "proving" to ourselves that the creative/intuitive mind *must* be limited in the information to which it has access, or the kinds of solutions it could conceivably bring forth.

The relevance of this observation to the present discussion lies primarily in the crucial implication of our experience with the creative process. If, as argued above, there are no clear limits on the potentialities of this creative unconscious "higher" mind; if it seems to be so much more knowledgeable and wise than one's conscious rational mind; if it has access to all the knowledge available to consciousness and more — then why save it for emergency use only? Why submit to it only the specific problems that the ego-mind has selected out

as "difficult?" Why not turn to it with *all* decisions, including the most important and immediate: What should I do next moment? What should I do with the rest of my life?

We may observe that the ego-mind is not eager to lose its control and become subservient to the creative/intuitive mind. It does not want to admit the belief that a "higher" mind exists, and it assembles its most logical arguments to disprove the possibility, and to warn of the hazards of trying.

By now it is apparent in our arguments that we are approaching the domain of our fourth "tentative conclusion," which is:

4. *The realm of the spiritual is a valid and important part of total human experience, that needs somehow to be accommodated in any society's knowledge system.* Scientists of an earlier generation were guilty of overclaiming when, with abundant hubris, they dismissed religion as prescientific theories about matters on which science would eventually have a later word, if not the last. To be sure, the religionists were particularly vulnerable when they insisted that characteristics of the physical world (e.g., the relative positions of earth and sun, the age of the earth, and the physical ancestors of humankind) should be established by Holy Writ rather than empirical observation. But the scientists, on the other hand, were seriously in error in insisting that all the religious traditions of the world were based in illusion since the realm of experience they took as central was not caught in the net cast by science. As we have seen earlier, we should not have expected those aspects of experience to be other than anomalous in a science almost totally focused on the prediction-and-control function.

Science and the "Perennial Wisdom"

The four "tentative conclusions," especially the latter ones, are in no way "demonstrated" by prediction-and-control science — nor will they ever be. Neither will they be contradicted, since they receive impressive corroboration from another source, namely, certain underlying similarities in the world's diverse religious traditions.

While industrial society has excelled in its own kind of science, other kinds of research aimed at the search-for-meaning kind of knowledge have been carried on in many societies, for thousands of years. Comparative examination of the rich variety of religious traditions in human history leads to an extremely important conclusion. Whereas the *exoteric* or public versions of these religions differ markedly from each other, there are also *esoteric* versions typically understood by some inner circle and tending to require for their understanding some sort of discipline involving exploration of extraordinary states of consciousness. These esoteric versions appear to be essentially the same for all durable traditions, East and West, ancient and modern.[1] All these traditions appear to be based in the same kind of deep inner experience, potentially accessible to all humans.

This common esoteric core of the world's spiritual traditions, this "perennial wisdom," includes something like the following propositions:

1. Each of us is culturally "hypnotized" from infancy, perceiving the world in accordance with the myriad suggestions we have absorbed from the surrounding culture. A prime task of adult life is to become dehypnotized, "enlightened."

2. As this dehypnotization occurs, it becomes apparent that there are potential levels of consciousness far beyond ordinary consciousness in the sense that ordinary consciousness is beyond dreamless sleep. These levels may sporadically become accessible to conscious awareness. They include the creative/intuitive mind, whose contents seep through into conscious awareness as creative problem solutions, moral insight, or artistic inspiration. Ecological, humane, and spiritual value commitments all ultimately stem from this realm of human experience.

3. Access to this higher mind can be improved by reinforcing one's belief in it (e.g., through the power of autosuggestion to alter subconscious defenses), and through practicing nonattachment to all else. In the end, one discovers it to be capable of guiding one's life far more reliably than the conscious analytical ego-mind.

4. The central understanding coming from this realm of experience is that there is one *mind* of which we all partake. Thus, mind is in no way limited, as a physical model of the brain-mind would suggest — in extensibility in space or time, in separateness from other minds or from nature, in the potentiality of creating effects in the physical world.

5. Thus at the deepest level, all people share a common interest and a common destiny — a destiny that far transcends the greed and fear, the pain and conflict, around which so much of our society is constructed.

We can now see the convergence of the four "tentative conclusions" of consciousness research and the "perennial wisdom" of the world's spiritual traditions. Thus there seems to be the potentiality that at some time in the future people around the earth might come to agree on the nature of their deepest inner experiences in the same way that they now agree on such scientific matters as the basic principles of physics and astronomy.

The means for reducing our value confusion are at hand. They are where we always knew they would be found — in our own inner being. But now it is clear how science can help to clear up that part of the confusion that came from unhelpful cultural beliefs of industrial society. ■

[1] *This point is made by numerous scholars. One excellent source is Whitall Perry (1971). A more popular version can be found in Aldous Huxley (1945).*

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I have been asked to give a written witness to my spiritual experience, which I would gladly do. But doesn't the will to witness destroy the witnessing?[1] It would no doubt be more correct to say that I am writing a confession of my belief. Whatever the case, I would certainly not want to bear witness to myself, nor even bear witness to my faith.

I am taking a risk! In fact, my confession could even seem to those who have not had an analogous experience as either foolish or even sacrilegious. This is because a witnessing is only possible within a mythical communion. By that I mean that it is the participation and communion in the same myth which makes the witnessing possible.[2]

Those who wish to go further can refer to the written testimonies of that great genius and contemporary mystic Raimundo Panikkar. Because it is above all he who serves as my guide to coherence in my searchings. "Witnessing is the nourishment of dialogue. To accept the witnessing of others, to include them in a wider and no less profound dialogue than that already known, this is one of the greatest tasks of contemporary spirituality."[3]

A SPIRITUALITY FOR THE XXth CENTURY AND BEYOND:

A Witnessing

By Robert Vachon

Confession of Faith

I am a Catholic-Atheistic priest

I believe that what we call the "great religions," taken individually or collectively, do not have the monopoly on either religion or spirituality. In other words, there also exists a humanist-secular and even atheistic spirituality which is not necessarily incompatible with the Judeo-Islamic-Christian faith.[4] Atheism is a constantly needed corrective to any belief in the existence of God, except when it attempts to be a substitute thereof.[5]

It seems to me just as important to affirm the existence of the Ineffable, the Transcendent, the Incomprehensible, that is to say God-as-Truth, as it is to deny God's existence as Supreme Being and to affirm that the question itself makes no sense. "God is the truth!" "No-God is the truth!" One single faith in Truth but expressed by two beliefs!

A "perfectly transcendent" God is an abstraction of the same order as a "perfectly independent" human being.[6]

I am a Pagan-Christian

I believe that the world (and the Church) has as much need of paganization as of civilization and evangelization.

I believe that the so-called "pagan" religions: traditional African religions, voodoo, *candomble*, and native Indian spirituality, are great religions and spiritualities, able to purify and fulfill the so-called civilized great religions, as much if not sometimes more than the latter can correct and complete the former. They are humanisms capable of humanizing and "developing" the "civilized" humanisms, as much if not sometimes more than the latter can help the former to "progress."

For me a good native Indian sweat-lodge equals a good closed retreat. A ceremony of the sacred pipe is equivalent to a eucharistic meal. The Host (Eucharistic Bread) is literally one of my fetishes. Not only does this not strike me as sacrilegious, but it seems to me to be a way of giving even more prominence and value to what is at the center of the Christian mystery.

To enter into contact with those "angels of nature," the *loas* and the spirits of the rocks, trees, rivers and stars, not only does not appear to me to be non-scientific and anti-spiritual, but on the contrary allows me to be fully scientific and spiritual. I am willing to combat pagan idolatry on the condition that we also combat the theistic and rationalist idolatry that sometimes makes idols of Yahweh, of Allah, of Christ and of Science. Does the latter not constitute a religious and/or "scientific" paganism?

I am a Hindu-Buddhist-Christian

To die to Christ seems to me to be a necessary dimension of a fully Christian life.[7] Every time I use the word Christ, I wash out my mouth afterwards, for fear of using His name in vain. The admonition of the Buddhist monk with regard to Buddha, I also apply to Christ: "If you see Christ, kill him." I accept that Brahman and Sunyata are possible dimensions-Incarnations of Christ, on the condition that it be accepted that Christ may also be a dimension-Incarnation of Brahman and Sunyata.

The Unique Way

At heart, I know that it is pretentious to call myself Christian, Buddhist, Atheist or Pagan. For I am still on the way to being this.

In the final analysis, there is only one Way. Not two. But I do not believe this means I necessarily have to choose between Christ, Krishna, Buddha, the Tao, or Freedom[8] as if these were mutually exclusive and irreconcilable. Nor do I believe that this means I must deny or water down the distinctions between them, reduce them to each other or to a common denominator. Quite the contrary.

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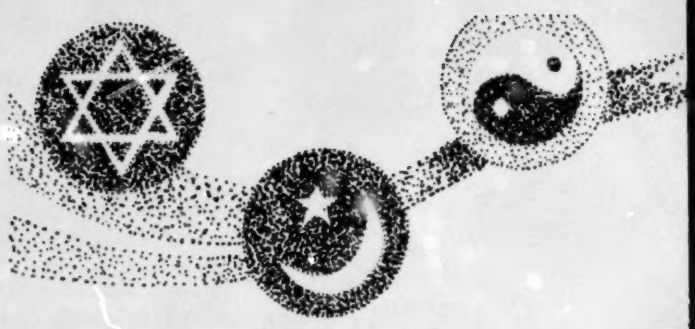


I believe that it is truly possible to see these elements and all these religions as complementary dimensions of one another and above all as original dimensions of the Great Mystery of the Unique Way that permeates, constitutes and transcends them all, standing forth as a living and unique symbol.[9]

How shall we name it? Actually, we cannot by-pass a concrete language to express the universal. This name can be Christ, Brahman, Allah, Humankind, Freedom, Sunyata, but the creative tension among these names allows us to continue rediscovering that this is a "name which is above all names."[10] It prompts us not to reduce the Infinite Mystery to a single sphere, whether the word divine, human or cosmos be used. Rather the need is to view this Mystery as an interrelationship of these three spheres, a *cosmotheantric* relation I will explore after tracing my spiritual journey.

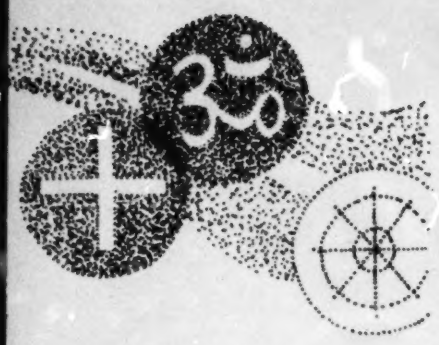
My Journey

I was born and raised in the Roman Catholic tradition. After six years of study at the Gregorian University in Rome, I was ordained a priest. After this I taught Thomistic philosophy-theology as well as sociology for six years. I was then, in succession, a hospital chaplain, Master of Novices in my community and, since 1967, animator and director of the Monchanin Interculture Centre, in Montreal, Canada.

It was at first secular humanism and then absolute and positive atheism which challenged and enriched my Christian faith. But it was only later, in contact with the Orient, that I realized this fact.

In 1963, at the time of Vatican II, propelled by something at the heart of my Christian faith, I felt that I had to turn, so I thought, from the "Triumphant" Church to the "Poor Servant" Church, by putting myself at the service of the most impoverished and deprived of the world, in a spirit of live-in solidarity and identification. "What you do to the least of these little ones . . . it is to me that you do it." I was completely caught up in the thought of touching the very flesh of Christ in this way. The poorest, in my eyes, at that time, seemed to me to be the "famished" and the "pagans" who had seemingly never heard the Good News of God's Love. This brought me to look towards India.

But a deeper meditation quickly revealed to me that if God is Love, as my faith claimed, then God loves all the earth's children (and not only the Christians) with a love of *total identification*. Consequently, God couldn't have given in a piece-meal way, but rather *completely* and *since always*. And I then began to ask myself the following questions: What



I believe that it is truly possible to see these elements and all these religions as complementary dimensions of one another and above all as original dimensions of the Great Mystery of the Unique Way that permeates, constitutes, and transcends them all, standing forth as a living and unique symbol.

if I need less to 'bring' Love to the world than to discover it already present? To assimilate it and identify myself with it? And what if this God of Love spoke to the Christian world through the "non-Christian" world? And what if God has left with the latter a message for the Christian world, a message just as important for the Christian world as the one God left with it for the rest of the universe?

I then began to look at the "non-Christian" world, less as an emptiness to be filled than as a fullness to be discovered. A fullness that might fulfill the Christian revelation as much as the latter claimed to fulfill the others. I was moving from a service or "savior" mentality to one of contemplative listening to the "non-Christian" Christ.

Not only did I begin to study the Bible carefully for signs of this openness to "pagans," but I began to meditate upon the Upanishads, to visit with Hindus, Buddhists, Muslims and Jews, and to live total immersion sessions in their respective spiritual traditions (Tibetan Buddhism, Zen, Sufism, Kabbalah, Hassidism, Yoga, Theravada). After five years of preparations, I travelled to the Himalayas to live in a Hindu monastery. For six months I travelled throughout India amongst the Hindu people and peasantry. This brought me to Tibetan Buddhist, Singhalese, Thai, and Japanese circles. I began to discover the Confucianism, Taoism and Buddhism of China, then the religions of Black Africa, and finally the world of the Native Peoples including Haitian Voodoo and Brazilian Candomble.

The Ojibway and the Iroquois initiated me into the ceremony of the sacred pipe, to the sweat-lodge, and the prayer of Thanksgiving (to the trees, animals, fire, and earth). The Japanese introduced me to Zen (Soto and Rinzai) as well as to Jodo Shin Shu, the tea ceremony, origami, and sumie. Chinese masters have taught me Tai-Chi for several years. Some Jewish friends gave me the opportunity to live some experiences of Hassidic Sabbath, and of Kabbalah. The Hindu monks of Rishikesh initiated me into Yoga, and for the past fifteen years I have participated in pujas to Durga, Lakshmi, Saraswati, Siva, and Vishnu, while sharing a Hindu life-style. Sufis have taught me dancing and other methods of meditation; Muslims have taught me Muslim prayer and the sense of the Unique. Contact with Haitians, black Brazilians and Africans brought the discovery of *loas, orishas,* voodoo, fetishes, water spirits, the cult of ancestors, the community dance, and an exalted concept of the Divine and of the Invisible. With secular humanism, in its different atheist, Marxist and socialist forms, came a deepening of secular spirituality, of Freedom as religion, of the person, of "homo faber," of rational Order, and of Proxis.

Since 1974 my research has passed from the religious to the cultural field, the two being truly inseparable. So it is that I have turned my attention to the unique kinship, found in the social, economic, educational, juridical and political cultures of each of the great ways of salvation, with all the original moral-ethical or simply human values that this included.

I try to approach the other cultures and religions from within, as possible sources of revelation of the Unfathomable Mystery of Reality, as possible complementary and fulfilling dimensions of my faith and my culture.

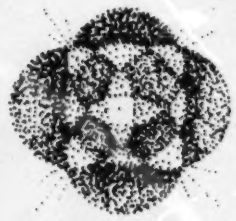
Such an encounter radically calls into question (though not necessarily into doubt) all aspects of my Western culture and of my Christian faith. It is an experience of "kenosis" which lays one bare. I have become particularly sensitive to Western and Christian arrogance as well as to the "saviorism" which often conceals itself at the very heart of service to the poor.[11]

A number of people think that I am anti-Western and that I have lost the Christian faith. They feel threatened. How strange! I have the strong and clear impression myself that this death to the Western and Christian ego through the experience of other cultures and religions reveals to me the true and unique values of the West and of the Christian world at their deepest level.

I gradually came to appreciate the different religions and cultures to the point where they became gradually integral parts of my spirituality and my culture. My identity has become intercultural and interreligious. And I haven't the slightest feeling of eclecticism or misplaced syncretism, of "pot-luck stew" or of confusion. There is coherence in all of this. And here I must pay homage to the one person who has helped me the most to find this coherence: Raimundo Panikkar, whose writings and life are dedicated to these kinds of questions which our pluralistic world poses.

"A cultural pastime!" will say those who are preoccupied with social questions and with questions of economic and political balances of power. I can only reply that the social question itself is the prisoner and slave of Western-Christian dialectics and that it needs to be liberated from its political, economic and religious monoculturalism. My social and political commitment is no less. The intercultural perspective has simply resulted in its taking new and unaccustomed forms.[12]

One single faith can be expressed in different beliefs which may be contrary and even contradictory. To recognize this is the beginning of the dialogue of faith between believers of different horizons. Faith is amenable to an ethical and doctrinal pluralism at the level of beliefs.



Most of all, I experience a great feeling of liberation. Yes, the experience of cultures and religions, however risky it may be, also liberates!

An Experience From Within [13]

What I am trying to describe much too briefly in these pages is neither a theory, nor a dogma, nor a new religion, but an interior experience. Here are a few reflections which are helping me to live it with some degree of coherence.

A Common Language[14]

It strikes one immediately that such experiences cannot be communicated unless there is a common language having meaning for the two parties. But since the ways of salvation (religious or secular) are profoundly rooted in different historical traditions, it is very difficult to find a common language having the same meaning for more than one tradition.

Difficult but not impossible! It is sometimes possible, as a temporary measure, to use a vocabulary borrowed from a given historical tradition to express something which fulfills the same function in another historical tradition, without necessarily reducing one to the other or equating them at a substantial level. There exists, in fact, functional equivalence between certain words, even if there is not necessarily an equivalence of substance. For example, at the substantive level, the words Christ and Krishna (for those who believe in them, that is) may or may not cover or reveal the same reality, but at the functional level they are equivalent in that they express the way of salvation.[15] So it is with many words such as God and Brahman.

In this same way I would like to look at some of the equivalents for the concepts of *faith* and *beliefs*. The word *faith* as I will use it here is not linked to any given philosophical or religious conceptions, even though these come from concrete historical traditions. As used here, the word is intended to be as valid for a Buddhist as for what we call an "atheist." I could very well have used another word, one from the Buddhist vocabulary, for example, but one must start somewhere.

Faith: an integral part of the human[16]

It is important to avoid the danger of speaking of *faith* as limited to any narrow religious faith. On the contrary, it is a profound dimension common to human beings everywhere, regardless of their religious, secular or even atheistic beliefs. A serious reflection on faith must not set aside a priori what people throughout the ages have lived "in faith."

Faith is that dimension within all of Us as human beings corresponding to the Mystery. Corresponding, that is, to the Myth taken as what we believe in without believing we believe. It links everyone of Us in all of creation to our Foundation, whatever it is and whatever name it has: God, Nothingness, the Absurd, Humankind, Society, or the Future. It sustains Us, unites Us with one another and with all reality, delivers Us from mere cosmic existence, from being simply a thing, and gives Us liberty.

Faith is not essentially a doctrine or an ethic, but that primordial element that makes possible the advance towards what We have not yet become. It is an existential openness: that source by which we create Ourselves, save Ourselves, perfect Ourselves, reach Our fulfillment, liberation and ultimate goals. It is the dimension that assures Us that We do not become entrenched in Our present state of being, that We remain open to perfection to Our goal and Our identity. With this meaning, faith is the infinite capacity for growth by which We discover that We are not complete, fulfilled, absolute or definite. It is the anthropological dimension at the base of every particular faith (belief).

In summary, there is a dimension deep within human beings, within their cultures and their religions, hiding in discrete, silent and interior ways, surfacing in a thousand modes, yet always giving testimony to that which infinitely transcends and surpasses Us, irrespective of the name it is given. This dimension is faith.

Faith and Beliefs[17]

If we must distinguish between *faith in action* (question, openness, desire) and *act of faith* (the existential response one gives to the question), it is also necessary for us to distinguish between faith and belief. Belief, which is the expression of faith, refers to the diverse formulations and contents of faith. But it is not faith. Yet there is no faith without belief; belief is a integral dimension of faith.

It is self-deluding to think or to believe that there exists somewhere a realm or spiritual horizon independent of human consciousness. Pure faith is always also belief. The

divine (whether we call it God, Christ, Emptiness or Humanity), as perfect or purified of the human aspect as we perceive (or receive) it, is always human. It has no sense, without the created being. The human is a part and parcel of the divine. But the divine dimension cannot be reduced to human consciousness.

No matter how purified of the divine and of religious alienation we conceive it to be, the human cannot be dissociated, this unfathomable dimension which belongs to all that exists. Faith itself, as divine as it may be, does not exhaust its own mystery!

Meeting the Faith of Others

Faith is neither the privilege nor the monopoly of one or another religious faith. It is at the heart of every religion and culture, even of those peoples incorrectly labelled "unbelievers." For example, it is pure arrogance to see only "faith" on the Christian side and "culture" on the non-Christian side. In that sense, the inculturation of the Christian faith into other cultures seems to me an act of spiritual colonialism and unbelief; it is contrary to faith not to believe in the faith of others, to reduce it to nothing but a cultural element, and to want to substitute one's own.

Every way of salvation, whatever it be, includes a faith, crystallized into one belief or another. *Therefore one only really meets a culture or a religion if one meets its deepest dimension, that is not only its beliefs but its unique act and experience of faith,* and hence its foundation or mystery.

Now the mystery or myth of faith, whichever it be, cannot be objectivized. The God (Krishna, Christ, Being) of faith, of those who believe, and the more historical, mythological or "scientific" God of those who do not share these particular experiences of faith, are two very distinct phenomena;[18] two different notions. The former is that of my own lived experience, my heart and my faith. God is not simply the subject of a learned history of religions nor a system or doctrine of faith. In fact, no doctrine or system could contain or express God.

So it is that one cannot encounter the faith of others solely as an object of knowledge or even as an object of faith. I do not say that the faith of others can never be an object of knowledge, but in making it so the faith, as such, is destroyed. *One can only encounter the faith of another by trying to touch the mystery which it is trying to express. By believing in it.*

We can only touch the faith of others by believing in it. This is only done, we forget too often, by a lived interior experience of the other's faith in a mythical communion within oneself and one's own faith. It comes down to no more and no less than believing that the beliefs of others can be revelations of the Foundation-Mystery which no doctrine of faith (religious or secular) can contain or express. We only understand a religion well and teach it well when it has become part of our personal convictions, when we believe it. Only when it has become an integral part of our own faith and our own religion can we really meet the faith of others.

One single faith can be expressed in different beliefs which may be contrary and even contradictory. To recognize this is the beginning of the dialogue of faith between believers of different horizons. Faith is amenable to an ethical and doctrinal pluralism at the level of beliefs. It is also possible to undergo a radical transformation of one's beliefs within the same single experience of faith; but this requires that different beliefs, contrary and even contradictory, be allowed to meet and enrich one another within one's own self, in the depths of one's heart, soul and spirit. The *inter*-religious dialogue requires an *intra*-religious dialogue.[19]

The Interpersonal and the Intrapersonal

One of the most simple and yet most neglected facts is that one can only encounter the mystery of the other person in a *personal relation*. The other person must be met as a *living witness* to his or her culture and as a *person*, that is to say, as an ineffable Who, a "Who Art Thou?" However, one cannot ask "Who" without being oneself involved in the question. The question "Who art thou?" is personally engaging; to ask "Who art thou?" is to inquire about the He or the She, the Thou and the I that this person is for *me* or for *someone*: WHO AM I? Thus there is no discovery of the mystery of the other without an *inter*-and *intra*-personal encounter and communion.[20]

A Realistic Spirituality[21]

I certainly don't intend, either here or elsewhere, to present my spiritual experience as a model. That would be contrary to spirituality. I would only like to point towards the new heaven and new earth of spirituality for the next age, in a spirit of synthesis which as such calls forth very different interpretations and symbolic languages.

There is not one spirituality but several: religious spirituality (either theistic or non-theistic); secular and/or atheistic spirituality; Christian, Jewish, Hindu, African, Chinese, as well as Native Indian spiritualities. In fact, there are as many spiritualities as there are persons. But spiritualities vary not only according to geographic and cultural areas, but also according to eras and generations. So one could well ask what is the spirituality which beckons humanity in the twentieth century and beyond.

And I do say humanity! The profoundly pluralistic and planetary context of every people and of every person necessitates that religious problems be formulated in a universal perspective; "every problem of a religious nature which is not today posed in a universal perspective, is a problem wrongly posed."[22] Such a perspective invites us to speak in terms of millennia rather than in terms of centuries, and to reach out to all dimensions of pluralistic reality.

We are presently living through the beginning of a *mutation* in human beings and in reality; a mutation as profound as the one that ushered humankind from the undifferentiated and more cosmocentric spirituality of the humankind of nature, to the more differentiated and more anthropocentric spirituality of the humankind of consciousness, of humanism and of science. The religious spirituality of the great religions (theistic or non-theistic) is insufficient. The same applies to the secular spiritualities of the various humanisms (religious, secular, ideological). To add together our insufficiencies resolves nothing. What is needed is a *metanoia of transfiguration and of great integrated solidarity.*

A Cosmotheandric Spirituality and the Integration of Reality

In synthesizing the foundations of a spirituality of the XXth century and beyond, I would say, following the steps of R. Panikkar, that we are invited to a mutation which is a "second innocence." This spirituality, he names "cosmotheandric."[24] *Cosmos* is taken to mean matter/energy, space/time; *theos* being not only God but the divine, and *andros* meaning humanity and its culture. This spirituality consists of recognizing the divine, the human and the cosmic (however we term these) as three organic, irreducible and integral dimensions of all reality. This does not mean abolishing the distinction between the divine and the human, or between the human and the world. Rather it means understanding that the perfectly transcendent or even immanent divine is an abstraction of the same order as a human being or the "objective" world, perfectly self-sufficient and independent.

The symbols or convergence points of this cosmotheandric spirituality can be either the divine, the human or the cosmic (each one using different names whether Christ, Allah, Brahman, Praxis, Freedom, or Humanity, Nature, Life, Tao). This global spirituality calls for very different and complementary interpretations and symbolic languages. But whatever the chosen dimension, it should include the other two as integral dimensions of itself. Otherwise it risks falling into abstraction.

Moving towards the bimillennium, we ask not only what spirituality for our age, but ultimately what realism. All must be integrated. Neither spirituality, nor humanism, nor secularism is sovereign. Only reality is sovereign and irreducible. So the question today can only be that of the *Global Integration of Reality*, at the level of vision, of praxis, and of universal and personal solidarity. Any integration that attempts to simplify reality, that tries to eliminate or ignore what cannot be easily assimilated, only takes us farther from our goal. The task is to try to gather everything together in the *Great Integral Solidarity of Reality*. ■

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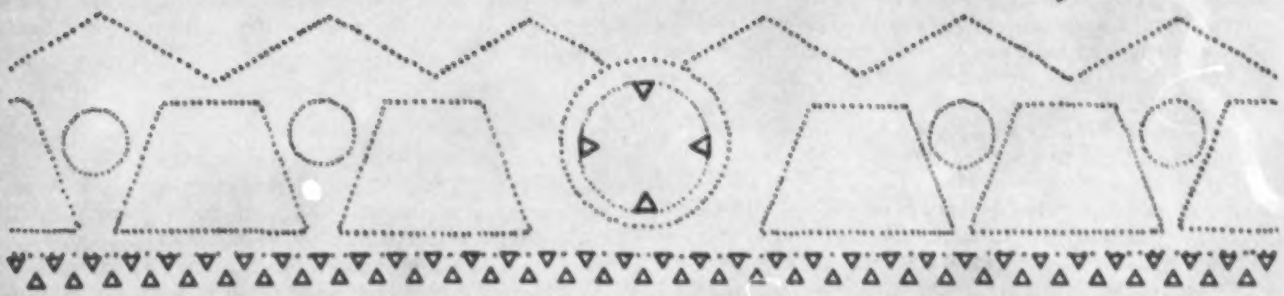
AFRICAN RELIGION AND ITS CONTRIBUTION TO WORLD ORDER

By John S. Mbiti



The term African Religion as used here refers to the traditional religious system of African peoples which evolved through the centuries as they experienced life and reflected upon its realities and mysteries. African Religion had no founder, and we cannot give a date for its origin. But it seems to go back thousands of years and to have been woven into the total history of African peoples. This religious heritage is integrated into their whole worldview, with both local differences from place to place and certain commonalities that are widely spread throughout the continent. Many of the features of African Religion have parallels in other religions of the world. This gives African Religion considerable relevance for human society at large.

This paper will examine a number of elements of the African religious heritage that seem to have applicability to World Order. These select elements have a positive value in the African setting. We would not wish to forget that in any system there are also unpleasant aspects, a host of demons. African Religion is not a religious paradise, nor is it going to solve problems which have bedevilled humankind from time immemorial. It is only a voice among many other voices, but perhaps a voice which has not been heard sufficiently in the global community. Furthermore, we should keep in mind that these elements make most sense within the contexts in which they have developed, contexts which are a complex combination of cultural, historical, economic and social factors. When taken out of their contexts, these elements lose something of their authenticity, of their genuineness, of their naturalness; they may even get distorted and neutralized. In sum, they are basically particularistic in place and time.

Religion and Community

Writing forty years ago, Jomo Kenyatta, later to become the first president of the Republic of Kenya, observed among his people the Gikuyu, that "there is no one man's religion." What he said about one part of Africa can be applied to many other African peoples. Religion is for the whole community; and the whole community is held together by its religion. In African Religion people or humanity are regarded as a composition of corporate individuals and of interrelationships. One individual over against the community cannot stand up and claim a meaningful religion which does not relate to the rest of the community. To be is to be in community, in relation with others. This corporateness carries with it both privileges and responsibilities.

African religious worldview on the community is perhaps best summed up in the statement: "I am because we are, and since we are, therefore I am." This philosophy can be illustrated by a variety of examples and considerations. We take a few of these. Throughout Africa we find traditional myths and stories that tell about the origin of humankind. In these, humans appear on the scene as either a couple or two couples (allowing for the wish to avoid incest among the first children). Whatever the origin of the human species, African Religion has the basic view that humankind is a unity from the very beginning.

This primeval unity has not been destroyed by time and history: it has simply been multiplied. Not only was humanity created in a nucleus community, but the method or substance of creation was one, according to African mythology. Thus, for example, it is told among the Bambuti Pygmies, the Fon,

the Shilluk, and many others, that God used clay to fashion the first human beings. The Yao, Basuto, the Shonea and Zulu, among others, believe that the first people sprang from a hole in a rock; the Herero say that the first couple (husband and wife) came from a mythical "tree of life" situated in the underworld; the Chagga and the Azande hold that God burst out of a vessel or canoe, and released the first people. A rather different myth from the Masai holds that one of four original gods came to the earth from the sky and became human so that out of this sprang all human beings, starting with the Masai themselves. The Banyarwanda still have in their language the name of the first person: Kazikamuntu (which means: "Root-of-people").

Thus in African mythology, the roots of the peoples of the world spring from a primeval unity. African Religion has affirmed and tried to express this unity even if that unity has been strongly opposed. We see the expressions of community in the social clusters of the family, the clan, the tribe, the nation and humanity at large. There are obligations, responsibilities and privileges for the individual and the community at all these points of reference. In African concepts, the family is a microcosm of the human society as a whole. It is also the nerve centre of the community. Within the walls of the family one learns to experience and practise the meaning of "I am because we are," for this is initially a biological and social awareness. One is in relationship with the biological ancestors without whom one cannot be. But that vertical line towards the original ancestry is matched also by a horizontal line by which the individuals in a given traditional community are interrelated in such a way that each one has, literally, hundreds of social mothers and fathers, hundreds of brothers, sisters, uncles, and so on.

These social relations are not static, but living relations. When one member of the community suffers, the rest share the suffering and thus lighten the burden. When two members get married, it is their respective families and communities in reality who get married with them and together hope with them for the procreation of children. African Religion affirms community also through the place and position given to children. Each young person is a carrier of seeds which should become the next generation. Marriage and procreation are a moral obligation imposed by the community on the individual because they facilitate the renewal and perpetuation of the community.

Community within the traditional context includes both the living and the departed. According to African Religion, human life does not terminate with physical death. The person continues to exist in the spirit world, a world parallel to the world of the living. Therefore both the living and the departed have intimate contacts. People claim to see the spirits of the departed, directly or through visions and dreams. The details about these links between the living and the departed vary from place to place. But the main issue here is that there is no clear separation between physical and the spiritual realms of human existence. The welfare of humans in this world has consequences for the welfare of humans in the spiritual world. People have an ongoing awareness of the world of the invisible and spiritual realities.

The ethical values that sustain the community are societal and relational. People are judged not only on the basis of what they are, but primarily on the basis of what they do. A person is "good" or "bad" in relational terms, the terms that relate him or her to the corporate community. The moral qualities that are valued most include kindness, showing of hospitality, truthfulness, respect for others (of older or higher rank), justice, protection (towards the younger and weaker), sharing, and so on.

Obviously this intimate corporate framework of society has its own problems. An African proverb summarises the situation succinctly: "Axes carried in the same bag cannot avoid rattling with one another." So there are rattles and scratches inflicted by individuals upon one another, and by the community and its members upon one another. Nevertheless, the community element has withstood this rattling through many generations.

The Element of Celebration

The element of celebration is prominent in African Religion. To live is to celebrate. Celebration expresses praise, thanksgiving and joy. In praise and thanksgiving towards God, the human soul acknowledges its dependence on God. People have many things for which to thank and praise God, including God's answer to their prayers, restoring them to good health, giving them children, rain and harvest.

Here is a traditional African song of praise to God, in which everything is summoned to offer praise to God. This prayer song is accompanied by movement of the body, dancing, clapping and general rejoicing in the community.

I shall sing a song of praise to God
Strike the chords upon the drum.
God who gives us all good things —
Strike the chords upon the drum —
Wives and wealth and wisdom,
Strike the chords upon the drum.

Celebration in African Religion is expressed through dances, festivals and rituals. For the wider community these festivals and rituals are related to the agricultural year and the keeping of livestock; within the smaller community the focus is on life-span and concerns of the individual. Embodying what people believe and what they value most in life, rituals and festivals are religious ways of implementing these values and beliefs of society. They cement together the life of the individual with that of the community. Through them, the individual personalizes his or her part in the wider and corporate community. They provide continuity and unity among those who perform or attend them. The ritual world has a degree of sacredness and authority about it, and it links people with the divine realm.

Personal rituals highlight moments in the life of the individual for which there is cause to celebrate. Starting with pregnancy and continuing at birth, these personal milestones

"Conspire together, O earth and rivers. Be gentle and give us plenty from your teeming plenty . . ."

in some societies may mark naming, teething, puberty, circumcision and other forms of initiation, engagement, wedding, procreation, old age, death and beyond. These rituals affirm the value of the individual; the individual matters and has a meaningful place in society. At the same time they integrate individuals more and more into the community of which they are members. The rituals provide occasions for community celebration. In personal rituals, the whole community is regenerated, and its rhythm of existence is reactivated and perpetuated.

Agricultural rituals and festivals have to do with both the land and the livestock. Farming rituals reaffirm the people's unity with the soil, the land, the crops and the seasons of the year. There are, for example, individuals in many African societies who specialize in the concerns of the weather, particularly the rain. Rain-making rituals, performed before the start of the rain season, are religious acts of linking the sky with the earth, sanctifying life, renewing and reviving life both for human beings and other creatures. In this act, people play the role of the priest of nature, responsible towards nature, respecting nature and covenanting with nature. There are rituals performed when people clear forest or bushes to make a new field. These rituals serve to remove danger and confer blessings upon the use of the new field. Rituals for the sowing of seeds, weeding the fields, tasting the first fruits, harvesting the crop and even putting the harvest in store — these are occasions for celebrating, for rejoicing and blessing the seeds or the harvest. Through them, people link themselves mystically with the world of plants and crops, the soil and the weather. They harmonize human life with the life of nature at large.

Stock-keeping rituals and festivals mark the killing, eating, milking, selling, blood-letting of animals (cattle, sheep, goats, in particular). Other rituals with animals relate to the drawing up of or of sealing contracts. As with other agricultural rituals, human life is linked through ritual to that of animals in a mystical way.

There are rituals that have to do with health, the home and family life. These are intended to prolong human life and make the life of the homestead and family run smoothly.

Festivals generally accompany many of these rituals. Thus, there are planting and harvest festivals, fishing and hunting festivals, coronation and accession festivals, and so on. In some societies, festivals are heightened by the use of masks, dancing, praying, benedictions and general jubilation. Through festivals, the life of the community is renewed. People are entertained, and their tensions are given an outlet. Festivals bring people together as a group, and strengthen their unity and cohesion. Momentarily the sorrows, fears, the anxieties, and even the loss through death, in a given community, are overcome by the power of festivals and celebration. Festivals renew the spiritual morale of the community. The rhythm of the rituals and festivals provides a therapeutic continuity of celebration of life, which gives people the courage and strength to smile even in the midst of adversities and hardships.

In African concepts, the family is a microcosm of the human society as a whole. It is also the nerve center of the community. Within the walls of the family one learns to experience and practise the meaning of: "I am because we are."

Healing, Health and Wholeness

African peoples know only too well the ravages of diseases, natural calamities, famines and suffering. In its own way, African Religion has tried to answer to this basic and common experience. Two thrusts have been developed: a search for the mystical causes of disease, and an approach to the question of health and healing from the perspectives of the whole community.

In the African worldview, disease, accident and calamity are caused by mystical forces. It is not enough to explain that bad sanitation is responsible for a variety of intestinal infections. People want to find out *who*, and not just *what*, makes a particular person contract an intestinal infection. They want to know *who* and not *what* has caused someone to fall down from the tree while picking fruit; people ask *who*, and not only *what*, has caused the young calves to die or the fields to produce poor crops.

The mystical causes must be identified and then dealt with accordingly. These are usually said to be magic, witchcraft, sorcery, broken taboos, evil eye, a misfortune-causing "tongue" (word), and the curse. Someone in the community is held responsible for provoking the mystical power, or for employing it secretly to victimize others or their property. In most of these cases, it is held that relationships between people among themselves, or between them and spiritual realities, have been broken and consequently the offended party reverts to using mystical power to take revenge. But sometimes this is done out of jealousy and hatred among the people.

There exist, therefore, experts and specialists who handle this serious aspect of community life. These include the traditional doctors (not without reason, though wrongly, called "witchdoctors" in popular missionary literature and propaganda), diviners, mediums, conductors of rituals, and priests who address themselves to this area. The professions of these men and women are highly respected in their communities. Those who serve in this capacity receive a "calling," followed by training (of up to ten years in some cases), a kind of "public" commissioning, and a sincere acceptance by their communities. Like with any other profession, there are crooks who pose as experts but are only there to cheat and exploit the needy.

Traditionally, the process of solving such problems as health, illness, barrenness, calamity, starts with finding out who in the community has caused them through the use of mystical power. Then there follows the use of medicaments and sometimes rituals of healing. The victim must be given the assurance that the mystical forces have been removed, and steps are taken to prevent their effectiveness if they should be employed against the victim again. By identifying the "*who*"-cause, the process of reconciliation and restoring good relations in the family or community is also set in motion. It is assumed that when good relations prevail in the community, there is no need for any member to do harm to another. The good health of one is the good health of all. The approach to health and wholeness is more sociological and pastoral than physical, even if people do not consciously draw such a distinction.

Exorcisms are practised commonly in African societies. They point to the world of spiritual beings, especially the spirits of the departed. There are also spirits associated with natural objects. Both kinds of spirits are believed to "possess" people, and therefore to disturb the health of individuals and the community. Diviners identify what spirits have possessed someone, and exorcise them accordingly. Again the question of the community (of the living and the departed) is featured here, underlining the basic wish for a harmonious relationship between the world of the human beings and the realm of the spiritual realities.

Respect for Nature

Another basic element of African Religion concerns human relations with the world of nature. Humans are not masters over nature to exploit it without feeling, to treat it without respect. Instead, people are one with nature, responsible towards nature, able to communicate with nature and the chief priests of nature. Humans should stay in harmony with nature, caring for it so that nature may also care for them. If they misuse or abuse nature, in turn nature will strike them back and cause them to suffer.

This posture of the human person vis-a-vis nature is not "nature worship" — a term wrongly used by ignorant outside observers when they wrote about African religious life. Nature is potentially a friend with whom humans may communicate, whose cooperation they may solicit, and whose generosity is a benefit for them. These points are best illustrated from a prayer traditionally recited by the official keeper of the community woods and forests among the Didinga people in the

Sudan. In this prayer, the earth, the woods and the streams are personified in order to communicate with nature. The supplicant pleads with them and waits for their favour and promises to give them thanks by way of offering them the first fruits of the field and the blood of goats. These sentiments illustrate a wish to be in harmony with nature. It is assumed all along that God superintends human acts in relation to nature, since God is Creator and Keeper of both humans and nature. Here then is the prayer as it is recited by "the Warden of the Forest, Master of the Clan," in the presence of God, the departed, the living and the earth (nature).

O Earth, wherever it be my people dig, be kindly to them. Be fertile when they give the little seeds to your keeping. Let your generous warmth nourish them and your abundant moisture germinate them. Let them swell and sprout, drawing life from you, and burgeon under your fostering care: and soon we shall redden your bosom with the blood of goats slain in your honour, and offer to you the first fruits of your munificence, first fruits of millet and oil of sesame, of gourds and cucumbers and deep-mashed melons.

O trees of forest and glade, fall easily under the axe. Be gentle to my people. Let no harm come to them. Break no limb in your anger. Crush no one in your displeasure. Be obedient to the woodman's wishes and fall as he would have you fall, not perversely nor stubbornly, but as his axe directs. Submit yourselves freely to my people, as this tree has submitted itself to me. The axe rings, it bites into the tough wood. The tree totters and falls. The lightning flashes, its fire tears at the heart of the wood. The tree totters and falls. Before the lightning the tree falls headlong, precipitate, knowing neither direction nor guidance. But the woodman guides the tree where he wills and lays it to rest gently and with deliberation. Fall, O trees of forest and glade, even as this tree has fallen, hurting no one, obedient, observant of my will.

O rivers and streams, where the woodman has laid bare the earth, where he has hewn away the little bushes and torn out encumbering grass, there let your waters overflow. Bring down the leafy mould from the forest and the fertilizing silt from the mountains. When the rains swell your banks, spread out your waters and lay your rich treasures on our gardens.

Conspire together, O earth and rivers: conspire together, O earth and rivers and forests. Be gentle and give us plenty from your teeming plenty. For it is I, Lomingamoi of the clan of Idots, who speaks, Keeper of the clan lands, Warden of the Forest, Master of the clan.

This prayer shows the considerable degree of human feelings towards nature and the personified feelings of nature towards people that are characteristic of African Religion. Nature is summoned to be "kind," to nourish the seeds, to give people out of its plenty and receive gratitude from them in return. Nature can show "anger" towards people, and "crush" them in its displeasure. Humans must, therefore, relate in a harmonious way, to the woods of the fields, the ground, the harvest, and the animals.

African Religion is a total system that is fully integrated into the traditional life of the peoples of Africa. But what has been a fairly self-sufficient system for many generations is now being challenged by the demands of a changing world scene. The peoples of Africa have begun to become the peoples of the world. There is a growing convergence with the rest of the world, a sharing of history, of destiny, of the fears and hopes of one world. The spreading of the Christian Faith, the expansion of colonial Europe in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, the miraculous fruits and promises of technology, these and many other factors have forced Africa to move out of isolation and provincialism, to a more global platform. This global orientation demands taking the future seriously.

But looking to the distant future has not been a strong element in African religious thought. It has entertained no concept of history either moving towards a particular goal or consummation, or towards an apocalyptic end of the world. African concepts of time emphasize the past and the present, plus only a brief projection into the future. African languages have difficulties in expressing concepts of a distant future dimension of time. Whereas there are thousands of myths about the past, there are no myths of the distant future in African Religion.

African peoples have traditionally been deeply religious. Their worldview is a religious one, and it is out of that religious worldview that we have isolated some elements which could be added to the global platform of World Order. These elements include emphasis on basic unity of humankind, one community framework of life, on a posture of celebrating life, in a community approach to matters of health and wholeness, and on humankind's respect for nature. Africa brings these religious elements into the open in its interaction with the peoples of other continents and islands. These elements have been of enduring value in the context of African traditional society. But can these elements be incorporated into the vision of world order? In what ways can the world realize the implications of the unity of humankind? Can we in the midst of today's injustices and struggles find and nourish a meaningful community life? Can we incorporate the spirit of celebration which respects the life of the individual as well as the life of the community? Is there still room and time for us to establish a relationship with nature that incorporates human respect for and responsibility towards nature?

Positive answers can be given to these questions. But these can only be answers in the process of struggling to make them come true. I am convinced that religion has a place and role to play in shaping this vision of the future of humankind and making it come true. Religion projects a certain order of life, carved out of people's experiences and reflections. Left to itself, religion might sacramentalize the whole of life. But obviously life is more complex than that and there are other considerations that exert their influence in shaping human life and history, such as politics, economics, ideologies, science and technology. Nevertheless, we need a spiritual dimension to undergird the emerging development of human society. It is within religion that we can seek for this spiritual undergirding. It is also within religion that we can best wrestle with such questions and the meaning, purpose and ultimate destiny of human existence, and in this spiritual task, African Religion has a unique place and a special role to play. ■

SOME DIFFERENCES BETWEEN EASTERN AND WESTERN SPIRITUAL ORIENTATIONS

Editor's note:

While a "global" spirituality includes an exploration and affirmation of that which binds together as one the whole earth and cosmos, it must also recognise and respect the fact that there are some basic differences in worldview among the billions of people who comprise our earth community. Vana Kim here briefly highlights some of the differences in the traditional spiritual orientations of East and West; differences which must be appreciated if we are to build bridges of communion.

BY VANA KIM

A conspicuous element in the spiritual orientation of the traditional Chinese, Korean and Japanese is the philosophic emphasis on life in the here and now. Attached to this emphasis is a string of other characteristics that taken together, distinguish Far Eastern cultures from those of the West. Among these are the capacity for intuitive thinking and a communitarianism based on the notion of "we" rather than "I." Connecting these two is an aesthetic perspective in which the world is seen not as a storage room of objects inviting our rational, inquisitive mind to explore, but as an organism consisting of a zillion integrated parts, human beings included.

The two fundamentally different modes of thinking in the East and West have sprung out of two not entirely dissimilar paradigms. In Western religious traditions of Judaism, Christianity and Islam, God created the world and nurtures it. In Taoism, the Tao, or the Way, created heaven and earth, nurturing ten thousand things that grow in between them. This type of parallelism has led some scholars of comparative religious studies to conclude that the Chinese notion of "Heaven" is identical with the Western religious notion of "God." This is a grave error, which limits a full understanding of the essential differences between the two cultures.

The Western God is a personal God who is perceived as having created humans in God's own image, although God is much greater than humans in all aspects. The Western God is also an ethical God who makes moral judgments on human behavior, rewarding some and punishing others. In contrast, the Chinese notion of heaven connotes no hint at all of a personal god; it is impersonal just as the notion of Tao is entirely impersonal. In the course of time, the concept of Heaven changed slightly and has now come to imply the bearer, or witness of inner truth.

In Western religions, humans are imaged as small and helpless before the almighty Being who holds the key to human salvation. In traditional Oriental beliefs, God-like human potential is available to anyone wishing to participate in the fullness of life. Humans are participants in the life procession rather than unrelated third parties watching the spectacle. They can understand the mystery of life best by living it out rather than by merely engaging in discussions about it.

This attitude — to learn what life is all about by living it to the fullest possible extent — is enhanced by the absence in Oriental culture of the fear of God and the doctrine of Original Sin, concepts that have weighed heavily on the hearts of many Christians. Also missing in the Oriental culture is the dualistic separation of body and mind. Rather than interpreting the human body as a source of evil, the Orientals looked upon the body as the ultimate source of life and also of happiness. Mind is seen as a higher expression of life originating within the body. With this outlook, Orientals developed a deep thrust in the wisdom inherent in the body as a living organism. The scope of this bodily wisdom is even believed to surpass the wisdom acquired *aposteriori* by the mind. Thus a wise person is thought to be one whose mind and body function in harmony. This wisdom is accumulated as a result of paying faithful attention to the natural expression of human life, without hastily judging it.

This organic view of life was not confined to conceiving body and mind as one inseparable unit. It also applied to seeing all of human society as one large unit, and human society as just one aspect of the greater unit called Cosmos.

Intuition plays a central role in the

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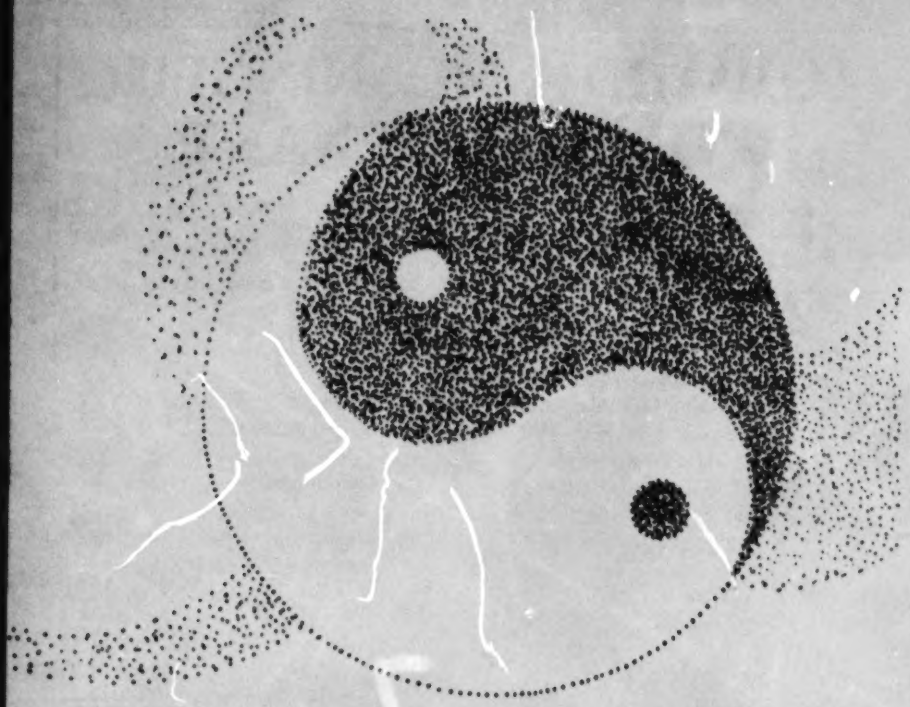

operation of Oriental minds. A characteristic of intuitive thinking is that it focuses on the overall picture of an event in its living context. What began as a spontaneous awareness of the immediately given may be followed by analysis. However, the lead is taken from an appreciation of the whole circumstance, rather than from a process of speculation or calculation.

Orientals have seen that intuitive thinking is the most universal of all types of thinking, for it does not rely on culture-bound or education-bound frameworks. It is less based on preconceived concepts than on data gathered by the physical sensibility of the living organism. Confucius, whose teachings have had a major influence on the thought patterns not only of China but also of Japan, Korea, and some other East Asian countries, said that by nature human beings are the same, and by learning they become different. Where the cultures do not reject the initiative, it has been possible to acknowledge more similarities between individuals than differences. Affective relationships develop, and a feeling of intimacy becomes a cohesive factor in human relationships.

A sense of "We" dominates the thinking of Orientals. In contrast to Westerners, Orientals do not have a clear-cut sense of "I" as a living unit apart from "we." (This phenomenon was dramatically illustrated by the Japanese in their successful post-war economic and social development.) "I" gets its existential meaning only in relationship with others.

In Oriental thought, the controlling factor in individual conduct and relationships is not a law, not even a set of commandments. It is, rather, "aesthetic sensibility." A sense of harmony and balance is a measuring stick of what one ought to be doing in interpersonal relationships. (These are the only relationships, since a personal God was nonexistent in the Oriental mind.) A fixed criteria of what is right or wrong, good or bad was looked upon with suspicion. What is fitting for individual relationships was to be found in the aesthetic sensibility of the parties involved rather than in externally imposed criteria. Since bodily desires, occasional ill thoughts about others or some misdeeds are considered normal aspects of less than perfect human nature, such human inclinations are not condemned but accepted. Taoists, for instance, believe that humans are born perfect but that intellectual training divides one against oneself. Hence, following a formal education, one needs to undergo a de-intellectualizing process in order to regain the original sense of harmony and balance that got weakened in a specialized environment.

Taoists hold that true wisdom is gained in an honest human encounter rather than in schooling; schooling more often than not spoils one's sound mind. An open mind, unrestrained by a fixed viewpoint, is valued above insistence upon general righteousness. In the Taoist view, all living organisms, including human beings, have an inner rhythm that cannot be violated without doing irreparable harm to the entire well-being of the organism.

Aesthetic sensibility in human relationships is developed when attention is paid by individuals to doing justice to each other and by being mindful of the inner rhythms of all parties engaged in a relationship. No hard and fast rule can guide one to master once and for all what is right to do at a given moment because of the infinite number of variables.

Aesthetic sensibility is considered the highest of all human capacities as it gives personal meaning to all that is registered in the human consciousness. By virtue of this capacity, humans are creators of cultural worlds that are entirely their own.

Oriental philosophy does not recognize the Fall or Original Sin. Salvation in the Oriental view is understood in terms of self-possession, and not self-dispossession (handing one's soul over to some other being). Self-possession in this context means fully accepting the way one is, including one's limitations, and being in control of oneself. This means bringing one's body and mind into unison with others for mutual support. The Oriental hope is not to live happily in the *next* life, but to get the most out of *this* life. And the way to do this is to accept and acknowledge the fullness that life has to offer in terms of replenishing one's spirit by the life bubbling all around one. ■

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TOWARD A MEANINGFUL WORLD COVENANT

BY DANIEL J. ELAZAR

The Jewish tradition suggests a vision which, while offering no short cut to final solutions and even hedging on any promises of utopia, has already demonstrated a real measure of value in moving humankind toward a better world — not only for Jews but for others raised in its spirit. I refer to the vision of a covenanted world order composed of covenanted communities.

The Covenant Idea

The covenant idea (the Hebrew term is *b'rit*) is deceptively simple yet the entire Biblical worldview and consequently the essential outlook of all Biblically-rooted traditions is built around it. The term *b'rit* signifies a compact, usually perpetual, between parties having independent but not necessarily equal status, that provides for joint action or obligation under conditions of mutual respect in such a way as to protect the integrity of all parties involved. A covenant is much more than a contract (although our modern system of contracts is related to the covenant idea) because it involves a pledge of loyalty beyond that demanded for mutual advantage; it actually involves the development of a community of souls among its constituent partners.

The most beautiful example of this covenant spirit between individuals is that of David and Jonathan:

> *(1) The soul of Jonathan was bound up with the soul of David and Jonathan loved him with all his soul . . . (2) And David and Jonathan made a covenant in their love for each other (which was) like the love of each for his own soul.* (I Samuel, 18)

In Biblical terms, God relates to the universe and the creatures within it, including humans, through a system of covenants. In one sense, this is known to all of us because we are familiar with God's covenants with the patriarchs and Israel. In the book of *Bereshith*, Chapter 15, God makes a covenant with Abraham promising him an heir to continue his household and reaffirming earlier promises to grant these heirs the Land of Israel in perpetuity in return for Abraham's faithfulness and devotion. In the book of *Shmoth*, God and Israel join in covenant at Sinai:

> *Moses went up to God and the Lord called to him from the mountain, saying, "This you shall say to the House of Jacob and shall you declare to the People of Israel. You have seen what I did to Egypt and how I carried you forth on wings of eagles and brought you to me. Now, if you will obey me and observe the terms of my covenant you will be my treasured possession among all the peoples. Indeed, all the earth is mine but you shall be to me a kingdom of priests and a holy people."* (Exodus, 19)

Further examples could be cited which demonstrate the particular character of the relationship between God and Israel.

This covenant must be viewed within the larger context of God's covenants with all people. The beginning of this relationship is implicit in God's dealings with Adam and Eve, particularly after they acquire knowledge of good and evil, but the first formal covenant is made with Noah after the Flood. Through Noah, that covenant is binding on all humanity and is the basis for universal law.

Even God's relationship with the natural order and lower forms of life is built upon the covenant principle, according to the Bible. Thus Jeremiah, foremost prophet of the covenant idea, says:

> *So the Lord has said, "If my covenant with day and night does not stand, if I did establish the fixed order of heaven and earth, then will I also reject the offspring of Jacob, and David my servant . . ."* (Jeremiah, 33:25-26)

The covenant with Noah also included all living creatures:

> *God said to Noah and to his sons with him, "I now establish any covenant with you and with your offspring who will come after you and with every living thing that is with you — birds, cattle, and every wild beast as well — all that have come out of the ark, with every living thing in earth."* (Genesis, 19)

Moreover, the Bible indicates that the covenanted relationship is the only proper basis for political organization. In this respect, covenants are used to unite the governors and the governed under God into a just commonwealth. The model political covenant is found in the book of *Joshua*, 24, where Joshua assembles the representatives of the twelve tribes of Israel, the tribal and national officers, near Shechem, after the conquest and division of Canaan, to renew before God the old political covenant of Moses which had established the Israelite confederacy after the Exodus. Similar covenants were made after every major political change or reform in the history of Israel, witness the description of the election of David to the kingship of the United Tribes:

> *(1) All the Tribes of Israel came together with David near Hebron . . . (3) All the elders of Israel came together with the king near Hebron and King David made a covenant with them before the Lord at Hebron and they anointed David to be King over Israel.* (I Samuel)

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In the Bible covenants are also used to establish permanent political boundaries, to guarantee human welfare requirements, to make perpetually binding treaties, and, in a very dramatic situation, recounted in *Ezekiel* 17:13ff, to cement the allegiance of the Jewish commonwealth to Nebuchadnesser in return for local autonomy.

Marriage is one of the most important and sacred covenants of all (*Malachi*, 2:14). Like the covenant of friendship between David and Jonathan, it involves partnership of souls, not simply a contractual arrangement. In all such covenants between one person and another, God is implicitly present as a guarantor.

Covenants are established as contractual arrangements but they are effectuated through *chesed*, a term which contains so much meaning within it as to make it untranslatable. For those who must think of it in English, it has been cumbersomely expressed as "covenant-love," the kind of steadfast devotion exchanged between the partners to a deep covenant which gives the covenant its inward or spiritual content. *Chesed*, or covenant-love, is a mode of action that goes beyond the "on the face" requirement of *b'rit*.

Chesed is the Biblical supplement to *tzeked*, or justice. It seeks the same ends as the concept of love in Christianity but is used much more selectively. Jewish Tradition makes a clear distinction between those deserving *chesed* — i.e., those bound by true covenants in which God is a party — and those who simply deserve *tzedek*.

Shalom (roughly translatable as peace or harmonious relations but meaning much more than that in its implications of completeness) is the ideal outcome of a covenant relationship. The Bible indicates that, in the world as we know it, *shalom* comes through covenants among people that are animated by *chesed*. It also indicates that such peace is at best partial and is inevitably fragile. The patriarch Jacob and Laban his uncle — two strong persons whose contacts inevitably provoked conflict — made a covenant of peace in an effort to harmonize their interests for the sake of *shalom* (Genesis 31:43-54) but it was only workable on condition that they remain apart.

Most important, the covenant idea in the Bible is more than a form of interpersonal or political relationship. It is through the covenant that God, by free will, relinquishes some of the absolute power held over the creatures thus giving them their status as independent beings. It is in this way that humans in turn gain free will. Moreover, once God enters into a covenant of this kind, God, too, is bound by it — at least until the other parties violate it repeatedly, past the limits of God's *chesed*.

The covenant, however, is a two-way street. God grants autonomy to God's creations in return for their commitment to approved patterns of existence, patterns that give each of the creatures proper duties for them to fulfill, duties which are delineated in covenant law. This commitment has two implications for human beings. In the first place, they are raised to a new level of importance because they can be parties to a covenant (or partners) with God — can take responsibility for their acts and can assume obligations. But, by being enabled to consent to a covenant, should they not so consent, they are punished by their own acts. The Biblical record of Israel's punishments is explicit here. Israel broke the covenant repeatedly until God's *chesed* was exhausted; they were then punished. Later, after Israel had been sufficiently chastised to stimulate their return to the terms of the covenant, God would renew the *chesed*.

The Covenant Vision

If we were to construct a picture of the good world order as presented in the Bible and Jewish Tradition, for the "end of days," we would see a vision of the whole world bound by interrelated and generally equal covenants into a "covenant system" with each covenanted party bearing specific responsibilities toward God, the natural universe, and humankind. In this vision, there is no hierarchy of authority among people except as covenanted.

All covenants are based on the moral law — on the recognition of the sovereignty of God and the values embodied in the great value concepts of the Bible — so that the activities of all societies and all aspects of society are measured in moral terms first and foremost. Thus there are moral limits placed on human behavior — including science, the arts, and "creativity" generally — and moral requirements directing human behavior in specific ways. As it is stated in *Proverbs*, "The beginning of wisdom is awe of the Lord."

A covenanted world order of this kind is neither collectivist nor individualist. It is certainly *not* based on a universal state serving a society that does not recognize distinctions since proper distinctions are of the utmost importance to it. (One of the deepest problems of the modern world is the indiscriminate erasure of distinctions, good or bad — distinctions between men and women, adults and children, Jews and non-Jews.) It is based on the continued existence of strong communities formed by consensus of their members, who give their consent through covenants that strengthen them as persons because they have ceded certain rights to the community.

Consent and submission are both central here. To my knowledge, though Judaism provides the classic example of a way of life based on detailed law, there is no Hebrew way to say "obey." The nearest Hebrew equivalents mean "to hear" or "to pay attention to." In both cases the implication is clear — human beings can be called upon to listen or to pay attention but they cannot be forced to obey. They can simply be informed of the terms of the demand and of the consequences of their refusal to respond but the decision remains theirs. Because of this fundamental independence of judgment, the Bible says, human beings can only be brought together into communities through a covenant relationship which affirms this independence even as the independent parties freely limit themselves.

Beyond that, the success of the covenant system depends upon each community's diligent cultivation of its own integrity insofar as it conforms to the moral demands of the covenant.

The covenant vision walks a close line between linking human beings and communities together and allowing them space in which to be free. The ambiguous origins of the Hebrew word

B'rit tells us much about this fettered freedom or liberating bondage. Of its two Akkadian root words, *biritum* means "space between" while *beriti* means "fetter" or binding agreement." The tension between the two makes it possible for the covenant idea to stand as a potential antidote to both the mass society and the jungle.

Applications of the Covenant Principle

In the past, the covenant idea has flourished in periods similar to our own, when people found themselves faced with the problems of reconstituting masses into communities and societies into commonwealths. Disregarded at times, its principles did not die when the Bible was exiled — with the Jewish people — from its land. Nor was its vision buried in the traditions of a persecuted minority ignored or oppressed in the midst of communities which boasted new dispensations tenuously covenanted. After a strange half-sleep of some 1600 years, it rose again from the very pages of the Bible to confront Western religious leaders at the very outset of the modern era. As seventeenth century Calvinists and Puritans pondered their Bibles for guidance in building the holy commonwealth, they found the covenant idea a compelling guide. From them Dutch, English, American, and Jewish philosophers took and translated the idea into a secular political theory used as the basis for the development of modern democratic government generally and American constitutional federalism in particular. Within the framework of the Federal principle (the term "federal" is derived from *foedus* the Latin word for covenant) one perceives the old covenant of the twelve United Tribes of Israel — with Moses before the Mountain of the Lord and with Joshua in the Land of Promise.

But the age of reconstitution passed and the covenant idea ran into difficulties. Because it had been secularized, its vision was clouded and because it had been brought to earth it had become entangled with other theories used to exploit people rather than liberate them. By the mid-nineteenth century, very different theories linked to another vision emerged to assault the covenant idea — *laissez-faire*, socialism, Marxism, Fascism, and collectivism. While their failures were to become manifold in our century, their echoes remain to haunt us all — and to plague us with a vision of world order that can only lead to a "Brave New World" or a "1984."

Means and Ends

In light of the covenant idea, what can we suggest as the Jewish vision of good world order?

1. A society of individuals (people, families and communities) who are freely bound to each other and to the moral order by covenant; a covenant that encourages them to maintain their diverse integrities but does not confuse the legitimate search for individuality with the idea that they can follow their own stars without limit. Covenant implies law and law sets forth guidelines and limits.

2. A world community of substantially self-governing nations composed of substantially self-governing communities bound by interlocking covenants. Political covenants that encourage partnership, cooperation, and forbearance among nations and communities to allow each to act correctly by its own choice and will.

3. The extension of meaningful political covenants in as many ways and directions as they can be extended.

4. Ultimately a world-wide covenant society of individuals, communities, and nations but not a world-state based on a single universal society.

The foregoing is indeed a utopian vision, fit for the "end of days" and far removed from the immediate possibilities of our own time. Yet its very utopianism is useful — it makes us aware of what real solution is and how difficult it is to achieve it, thereby preventing us from seeking easy answers that will lead us into dangerous paths. At the same time, it is a vision so structured that we can reach out for it without destroying ourselves in the process.

What steps can we suggest to start reaching out for it?

1. A revival of the covenant idea as an operating principle as part of a renewal of the search for basic principles in the world.

2. The slow construction of covenant relationships among individuals and peoples who are wiling to accept the binding obligations of covenant-law and *chesed*.

3. The extension of meaningful political covenants in as many ways and directions as they can be extended.

4. The recognition of different orders of relationship among people and nations based on their respective relationships to the basic principles of the covenant and the development of appropriate policies to deal with each.

5. The constant effort to stimulate the cultivation of diverse integrities while promoting greater equality of material conditions throughout the world.

The practical difficulties posed by the covenant idea are no doubt apparent by now. It is not an ideology, hence it can only offer a vision and the outlines of a pattern. The covenant system may be based on unity without uniformity but it is also predicated on a common conception of truth. It is not simple pluralism — far from it. Not every interest "goes." Rather the good world order will embrace only covenantal diversity. Still, the covenant vision is not a call to the fanaticism of a self-righteous crusade. It simply says that people will achieve the good society on earth when every nation cultivates its own moral integrity under its own covenant and when people relate to each other through *chesed*, acknowledging that the road to that goal will be long and arduous.

In the meantime, the vision of the covenant gives us some guidelines to follow and some standards by which to judge our situation. It can help us from confusing necessary tolerance of those who move away from the road with acceptance of their ways as equally legitimate and from the equally dangerous problem of confusing the necessary intolerance of evil with the bigotry of self-righteousness. It can help us select our steps along the way and to understand the inevitable setbacks. Perhaps some day this will bring us close to the goals we seek, to that place where we can fully see the unfolding of our vision. ■

SPIRITUAL VALUES AND THE QUEST FOR HUMAN DEVELOPMENT

Full human development is, in the sense of Paul VI's *Populoro Progressio*, development for the whole person (body and soul, intellect and will, everything that makes for full humanity) and for *all* people (rich and poor, powerful and powerless, all races, all cultures). It is a thoroughly encompassing concept, premising forth a genuinely valid anthropological insight about the nature of human life, namely, that all aspects of that same life — political, social, economic, spiritual, etc. — are intimately and intricately intermeshed and hence will not tolerate any form of reductionism. Without expanding on the point, it can be noted that most current ideologies, whether of the right, left or center, are equally flawed by their reductionist character.

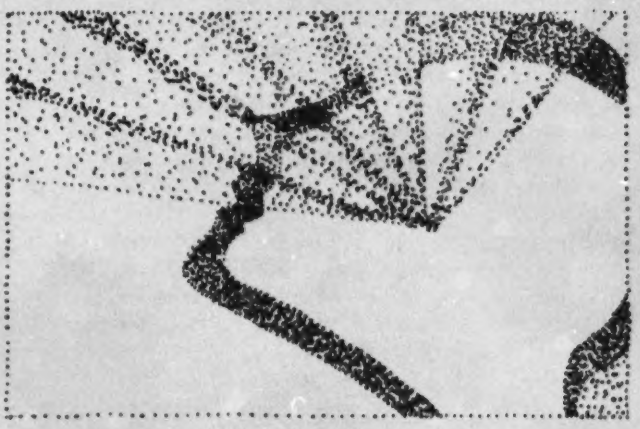
By Francisco F. Claver

Full human development as a vision is not utopian in the classic sense of the term. On the contrary, it is eminently viable, for the sole reason that we are dealing with *the human*, and the human has to be understood in terms of something that is essentially *perfectible*.

Any group of people with a common culture will be able to describe in fair detail what they define as the human, indeed as the ideally human, and their description will delineate how they conceive their vision of what full — or more correctly, *fuller* — human development is. It will be a vision that starts from what is, from experience, from life, and this very grounding of their vision in reality, *their* reality, is what takes the vision we speak of out of the realm of utopian imaginings into one of immediate realizability — or, better, of perfectibility. It is a vision hence that is geared towards the possible, the humanly possible. The sheer possibility of being more human — this seems to be setting our sights too low. But if the human is indeed perfectible, the possible is all we need.

If the goal, the vision of full human development, is holistic in nature, so must be the approach to its realization. In broadest outline this will mean taking into account in the development process every aspect of human life so that one part does not advance to the detriment of other parts or of the whole, whether the whole be one individual or an entire community of people. In all probability this balanced and integral process will rarely, if ever, happen in this imperfect world, but at least care will be taken to minimize imbalance.

If the concept of holism is incompatible with reductionism of any kind, we can still start with one or another aspect of human life. After careful analysis, we can isolate and identify a key problem or the main root of all other problems in the development process. But whatever that aspect is, it must always be taken in the context of the whole and its implications for or interlinkage with the other parts of the whole must not be disregarded.



Key Values: Human Dignity and Participation

Since we are concerned primarily with the human, the core value of an ethic of development will perforce have to center around human dignity, its protection and assertion, its enhancement and growth. Likewise, the main principle employed to actualize the ethic of development will have to be the unstinting participation of the individual (for her or his personal good), of all members of the community (for the common good). Human decisions taken by *people for themselves* are the key. The responsibility for decisions is theirs and theirs alone, and this responsibility is rooted in their very humanness, their shared dignity.

Now Bishop of the diocese of Bukidnon, in the Philippines, FRANCISCO F. CLAVER comes from one of the mountain tribes in the north of the country. His life experience and his professional training as an anthropologist have made him a strong advocate of full participation in development of human rights and of non-violence.

The new world order, we cannot stress too much, is *people:* the possibility of their becoming more human; their developing more just life structures for themselves, among themselves.

The Economically Disadvantaged

The denial of the possibility of becoming more human is the heart of the problem of people everywhere who are disadvantaged, economically and in every other way. Conversely, development for them will consist in making that possibility real and effective. This is basically what is aimed at by social reformers who make much of methods and strategies of social change targeted especially at modifying social structures. From a holistic point of view, it will help the argument if we speak of the disadvantage itself, the rationale for starting action with the disadvantaged, and their place in any development scheme.

The ethic of holistic human development touched on briefly above is strongly premised on the acceptance of and respect for the dignity of all people and of their full participation in decisions made for the individual as well as for the common weal. Everyone is the agent of one another's own good; everyone is the agent of one's neighbor's good. This ethic is based on human dignity. Participation in decision-making connotes responsibility to act for one's personal good and for the common good. Furthermore, when taken seriously in the order of praxis, that innate and inalienable responsibility translates itself in turn into power. The lack of this power — whether as a result of economics, politics or any other key aspect of human living — is the disadvantage we are concerned with. It is a disadvantage that strikes at people's very humanity for the obvious reason that it deprives them precisely of the possibility to *be* human, or at least to live in a human way.

The logic of the approach to development from the bottom up needs no justification if all we have said above about the fundamental and inalienable nature of human dignity is valid. When people are without dignity, no amount of restoring of their dignity by those responsible for its denial will ever give it back to them. Unless, of course, the disadvantaged, aware of their own dignity, and treasuring it, also assert it actively. If we take human development as a form of conversation among all peoples, it is the strongest who do all the talking (and the deciding) at all levels — whether individual, community, national or international. The weakest, again at all levels, are left out of the entire conversation. For human dignity to mean anything then, they, the disadvantaged, have to be brought in as equal participants in the conversation. And they must speak by themselves, for themselves.

The new world order cannot begin to be unless and until the kind of conversation described above takes place. Officials and bureaucrats can convene in an infinite series of conferences; intellectuals, and technocrats, can plan and dream and spin out theories and blue-prints of development; all to no avail, as long as the rank and file, the disadvantaged at all levels of human society, do not have a place in the general conversation. Without these voices, some kind of development will occur, but not the full and human development we speak of here. This is not to advocate a stop in the kind of conversations elites excel at, for these too are needed and should continue. Rather it is to call for concurrent conversations among the world's dispossessed and powerless. When what *they* say matters, we already have the beginnings of a new world order. The start of the new world order is with them, precisely because so far they have had no say, have been considered and treated as incapable of having a say.

When we speak of a new world order, the very globality of the problem is most daunting, and despair and apathy are the easy temptation, especially for people whose lives have for long been controlled by forces above and outside of them. So people have to start where they are, try to do what they can where they are. And this means acting together with others of their kind. It is to them that the new order matters most, for whom the advantages of change are greatest, and whose action is the most crucial despite their seeming helplessness. It is to them the vision we enlarged on earlier speaks with a meaning that they alone can fully understand simply because they are the most in need of hope, because they alone can work it into reality for themselves. If dignity and rights are to be more than mere words and slogans, they have to be ever validated by the very people who lack them. When people do not of themselves act to validate them — that is when they are most helpless.

Social Justice

Recognizing the dignity of people and the rights that flow from that same dignity is incumbent not only on the individual citizen but on the state, the polity, the community. Indeed, recognition by a body bigger than the individual is what social justice is all about. We cannot talk of full human development without also talking of this kind of justice.

The new world order that the quest for full human development connotes is thus of people, by people, for people, and whatever restructuring of society it entails will have to be one worked out by people for themselves. Although the ideal restructuring, hence the actuality of full human development, will probably never be fully achieved, the very real possibility of such restructuring and development taking place is often sufficient reason for people to start acting to bring them about. In a holistic perspective, every change in people relationships, however minimal and innocent it may seem, is bound to have an effect on the entire structure of society.

The new world order, we cannot stress too much, is *people*: the possibility of their becoming more human; their developing more just life structures for themselves, among themselves; their growth as people, interdependent, mutually supportive, concerned with individual as well as the common good. If this definition has validity, the next question to ask is, how do we bring this order about? To this perennial question of reformers and ideologues, all sorts of answers are being put forward. Many of the answers are ideological, some coercive and manipulative, others free and respectful of human worth. Despite all the differences, however, two major methodological and strategic denominators are coming to the fore: conscientization and organization.

Full Human Development

Conscientization. This neologism has become an ordinary term in the vocabulary of social workers and activists within the past ten years or so. Remarkably enough, it is used in a quite uniform sense everywhere (although motives for using it can be very mixed indeed): Conscientization is the coming to awareness of people of themselves and their life condition, and the generating of the will and the readiness to do something about it on their own. The methodology of action-reflection that it inspires is a self-discovery, self-help, preeminently participatory way of analyzing problems and working out solutions. It embodies perfectly the ethic of holism alluded to earlier. Conscientization can be deeply rooted in the primary value of the dignity of people and the principle of people-participation in arriving at decisions for the common good. It is an enspiriting, empowering force.

Organization. The mobilization of people to act in concert for the common good is possibly the fullest expression of genuine people-power. This cannot be done except through self-organization by a whole group. The organization can be very rudimentary or sophisticated, transitory or permanent, issue-oriented or faith/ideology-inspired, but whatever its nature as a functioning entity, its strength will depend on how truly participatory it is in its inner make-up, in its execution of common decisions, and in its constant centering on people and their good. The new human world order we are concerned with here, when brought down to its minimal effective working unit, is people at the grassroots level, mobilized and organized for power: power, that is not for power's sake, but for people.

What we have been speaking about all the while in the discussion of conscientization and organization above is the creation of *basic communities* of discernment and responsible action. In terms of the vision of full human development, the basic community of people interacting with one another face-to-face is at the same time the ambience in which development is to take place and the vehicle through which it is to come about.

The term "people-power" conjures up in the minds of many some distressing images. It is akin to *subversive* ideas like "the dictatorship of the proletariat, the tyranny of the masses, lay power (in a clerically-dominated Church)." But set within a holistic world vision of people and events, it assumes a meaning that is far from menacing, except to dictators and tyrants themselves. It is no more, no less, than the collective dignity of a people. It is a moral force capable of commanding recognition even from the most entrenched and arbitrary dictators. When actively asserted, it is a power capable of compelling whole peoples and states to act justly, even to the point of causing revolutions. If the disadvantage of the economically deprived lies in their helplessness, then the justice that will restore the balance, that will destroy their very helplessness, will also have to be a direct response to the imperatives of a people's shared dignity. When we talk of social justice, therefore, we cannot do so without taking into consideration the active exercise of that dignity — the power, innate and God-given, of people simply because they are people. Recognizing that dignity is the first act of justice demanded of all.

Spiritual Values

A new world order — any utopian dream, any vision of what is to be, any movement for change or reform — will not simply occur by itself, schools of economic and other determinisms notwithstanding. People are the architects of the world they live in and they do not fashion it without some idea of what they want, how they are to achieve it and just as importantly, why they want it. The *what* of social structures and world orders is never very far from considerations of the *why*, the values and spiritual dimensions. By looking at the place of culture, ideology, and faith we will see that these are the underpinnings, if not the very substance of the *why* of human development and the shaping of new orders.

The culture of people defines for them their world view and ethos, their norms and goals, their values and ideals. Taken as a whole, this is their way of being human as a distinct group. This is true whether the culture is "primitive" or "developed" and regardless of whether the definitions are implicit or explicit. Even though the actual culture of a people will never coincide perfectly with their ideal conception of it, still people do carry in their cultural ideals a sense of what they want to be as a people, how they are to be that people, and why. It follows that a new global order of full human development is possible for all peoples of the world, and we can expect from them a response that will lead to their realization.

However defined, the human will encompass the basic needs of people, and these needs, by their very commonality, will provide the basis and the framework of the full human development we are concerned with here. How a particular people will respond to those needs will depend to a great extent on their ethos, the complex of values they cherish as a people.

Faith. For the committed Christian, the values we speak of here will not be only cultural and human values (or ideological), but over and beyond, faith-inspired. Values of the spirit are not merely dimensions to be added to or imposed on already existing or envisioned human structures. These values are, or should be, the very ground and substance of those same human structures. At the very least they are, or should

be, intrinsic parts of the political, economic, and social forms within which we work out our mutual salvation. Faith is there from the very start. It does not dictate a specific world order, much less a specific program or ideology for attaining it, but it does enable one to discern and decide, to move and act towards a world that is authentically both human and spiritual.

Ideology. Social scientists often speak of the ethos of a people as their ideology — a systematic body of concepts about human life, a manner of thinking characteristic of them as a cultural group. In this sense everyone, by the sheer fact that everyone is a bearer of a culture, has an ideology. But ideologies — as definite theories and programs aimed at bringing about specific political orders — can be diverse and as numerous as there are excogitators, even within the same cultural tradition. Some will be more attuned to that tradition, others less so, and still others directly contrary to it. But howsoever conformed or contrary ideologies are to cultural traditions, the strange fact is that great pains will be taken by their proponents to give them a semblance of conformity — a simple fact which tells us plenty about the crucial role cultures play even for deep-dyed ideologies.

The point in bringing up the question of ideology is simply to pose the question: Does one have to subscribe to an ideology in order to bring about a new order of things? Or is a cultural ethos sufficient? The question would be academic except for the fact that actual formulas for social structures, both local and international, are heavily ideological in nature. The question is moot. Possibly the real question to ask is: Regardless of ideological considerations, is development taking place in any particular program or scheme? As one Latin American theologian has said, "What matters is not whether one holds a liberationist theology or not but whether liberation is actually being achieved."

True Human Development

If values are the well-spring of motivations for any step taken towards the realization of people's visions and dreams, they are of critical importance in any blue-print of people-development. For these values — the fundamental and human values of dignity, truth, justice, and of loyalty — comprise that intangible something that makes a people a people, endowing them with a special spirit, a distinct sense of peoplehood, and that is ultimately founded on human dignity itself. Yet a scrutiny of most developmental schemes put forth by governments, especially in Third World countries, reveals a depressingly uniform pattern which we can only describe as "development of people *without* people." GNP, balance of payments, national security, industrialization, modernization — these are the prime objectives, the prime values. Governments are all too ready to sacrifice whole generations of people to reach their ends. Coercion, manipulation, deception — these become the major methods of development. The sum of all this is a deadening of all that makes for the spirit of a people. A development program that kills that spirit or forces it to metamorphose into a baser form of itself is not human development at all.

The creation of the new world order we envision is contingent on the kind of action people will take, the kind of input they are willing to contribute. Where people are consciously asserting their dignity, their rights and freedoms, even under the most appalling conditions of oppression and slavery, there human development is taking place.

Need for a Global Public Sector

If we are to pass beyond the mere beginnings of the new world order, we will have to be serious about the creation of a global public sector. Two thrusts have great importance. First, we must create an environment of thinking and valuing that would make any form of human rights denial socially unacceptable. Secondly, we must build up well-defined structures of cooperation among people at all levels, structures that would unite people against any form of exploitation and oppression. These thrusts are nothing more, nothing less than the application and extension into the global setting of the two main methods of development we have spoken of, conscientization and organization.

As the forms of the necessary structures of cooperation evolve both temporally and conceptually, the question of the regulation of power will be raised. For even though human rights and freedoms are inalienable, they are not absolute and unlimited. Just as the power of oppressors and exploiters, whether governments, political parties, business conglomerates or other vested interests requires control, so too the power emanating from the people will have to be subject to control. Otherwise the "disadvantaged" who achieve power through conscientization and organization will in turn become oppressors. How the new structures will be built will challenge the creativity and the expertise of the best minds everywhere.

If we have seemed to stress the intangibles of life, it is not because meeting basic needs is unimportant. On the contrary, addressing the material needs of people and dealing with such questions as the production of goods are critical and legitimate aspects of development. Our emphasis upon the values of participation, responsibility, justice, and rights is intended, however, to counteract the severe neglect of spiritual dimensions in most approaches to development by technocratic planners. The things of the spirit are what give the human its unique character, and full human development is not possible without them. In a holistic perspective, both the material and non-material aspects of the human intermesh. ■

We must create an environment of thinking and valuing that would make any form of human rights denial socially unacceptable.

THE COMING OF THE SPIRITUAL AGE

By A.B. Patel

A.B. PATEL, renowned Indian statesman, wrote Towards a New World Order in 1974. Continuing the study of the social and political development of humanity as envisaged by Hindu mystic, Sri Aurobindo, Patel has had a long and deep association with the World Union International, in Pondicherry, India.

Can we envision the effect of an increasing number of individuals who, though small in number now, seek to manifest and express in their lives a deepened spirituality, endeavoring to live lives guided by the Cosmic Spirit? As more and more individuals accept the need for spirituality, a new world order will be stimulated and promoted. New institutions will be formed in all fields of endeavors with diminished selfishness, greed, competition and exploitation. Political, social, economic and educational sectors will all begin an evolution toward world order. Under enlightened international law, relations between nations will be more effectively regulated. Disarmament measures will be enforced, saving valuable resources needed to overcome poverty, hunger and disease. Development of land and ocean resources for the common good of humanity will contribute to an orderly progress of fulfillment. Above all, such a new world order will provide conditions and circumstances for spiritual growth in individual and collective life.

For a proper understanding and appreciation of the forces and factors that promote "spirituality and world order," we have to remind ourselves that Earth is an evolutionary planet. During the course of its evolutionary process, the planet has manifested *life in matter* and *mind in life*. The promise ahead is an even higher and greater manifestation, a manifestation of *spirit in mind*.

Evolution did not stop with the appearance of humankind on the planet. New forms of life, new principles of existence and new states of consciousness are continuously manifested. Therefore, we have to understand that what has evolved in the past is not final.

Perhaps in the evolutionary process this planet has so far covered slightly more than half its journey. Consequently, our present thoughts, ideas, ideals, relative truths, knowledge in all fields of life, institutions and systems are still incomplete.

In the long evolutionary process, we present humans may prove one day to have been transitional beings. The faculty of mind that governs our lives may be seen as an imperfect instrument of ignorance seeking knowledge through trial and error. We have so far created cultures and civilizations by this imperfect faculty, with the help of individuals who developed a higher mind or entered into the mind's regions of inspiration and intuition.

Perhaps that higher state is not mind, but a faculty higher than mind. Such exceptional individuals manifest in their lives an unconditional love, an unconditional joy and oneness with all beings and things. They pour forth love towards all, friend or foe, saint or sinner, wise or unwise, strong or weak, rich or poor, in the same way as the fragrance of a flower or the radiance of sunlight flows equally towards all. They are not disturbed by any conditions, favorable or unfavorable. They feel oneness with all.

The exploration of our inner universe may well prove more important than the exploration of the outer universe and the discovery of galaxies. It seems that during the course of evolution we have continuously expanded our intellectual capacities and broadened our hearts. It is quite likely that in the future we may develop much greater capacities and faculties. There are great potentialities for progress in our individual and collective lives. It is said that we have developed but one-tenth of our capacities, and that nine-tenths are dormant awaiting our awakening and growth. Release of this power is bound to shape a new world order with institutions and systems quite different and undreamt of at present.

We have now reached a stage, globally, where we can take evolution into our own hands. We could proceed several centuries in a few decades.

Conventional Age

All nations, societies, communities, groups and civilizations pass through several stages of evolution. At one stage they enter into a conventional age. In this period the outer forms of the spirit or the ideal become more important than the interior spirit or ideal. For instance, prior to the conventional age,

the family into which a person was born was considered less important than the person's individual faculty and capacity. Slowly an attempt was made to maintain the position of a person through education and tradition.

Eventually, in the conventional age, this status became fixed and hereditary. Increasingly formal arrangements and rigid forms came to characterize the principles of life, its very rules of conduct and its institutions. Although in the beginning of the period these effects were not so pronounced, eventually the life of the spirit became curtailed, imprisoned and finally stifled.

Rational Age

When the rift between conventions and truth becomes very wide and intolerable, the intellect revolts and begins to destroy these conventions and formulas. Reason begins to play an important role. Individual reason and desire for truth begin to awaken and eventually to prevail. This heralds the coming of the Rational Age.

In this age of reason there is a revolt against all traditions. The people aspire to action, progress and freedom. Even so, human beings continue to look for truth outside themselves and to seek perfection by mechanical means and not by the guidance of the Cosmic Spirit.

Transition to the Spiritual Age

Humanity is presently passing through the rational age, and the forms and principles of life and of institutions in all sectors of life are changing radically and rapidly. We are now called to examine the prospects for entering a spiritual age and to consider how spirit will manifest in mind, as mind manifested in life and life manifested in matter.

All around the world are signs that people are not satisfied with present conditions and ways of living. Affluence alone has not made us happy. We are looking for something higher than we have achieved so far. We are led to believe that the rational age is both a transitional age and a middle period in human development. Like religion, reason has helped the human race to progress in many spheres of life. And yet we are becoming aware that reason is a half light for our progress, and we are preparing ourselves to enter a spiritual age.

Our rational capacities are leading us to dissatisfaction with the limitations of reason. We now see that the Rational Age has erected a mass of new conventions and has failed to lead society nearer to perfection as it had hoped. Instead of continuous progress, improved economic conditions, and more creative leisure and culture, we notice a dramatic increase of disorder and violence. The mere improvement of economic conditions, however necessary, will not prove beneficial unless human beings allow their lives to be governed by the spirit.

Characteristic of the transition between the rational and spiritual ages is a growing subjectivism. There are signs that the barriers between soul and matter may become progressively thinner. The subjective phase is a necessary social cycle before the advent of a spiritualized society where humankind will move to a higher rung on the evolutionary ladder. During this time, human beings will move toward a more and more inward way of living. Their outward life will flow more clearly from their inward living. There will be growing awareness that ideas, ideals, ideologies, scientific discoveries and technological developments in themselves are not sufficient.

Advent of the Spiritual Age

Further human progress leading to a new world order does not lie in reason but in the soul and in our spiritual capacities. As we approach the advent of the spiritual age, the idea of the soul, the inner being, its powers, possibilities, growth, its expression and the creation of a true and helpful environment for it will be accepted.

As we enter the spiritual age, human beings will change their institutions, their systems and their ways of living; a new world order will take shape based on an acceptance of the universal human family.

Evolution of Social-Political Groups

Human evolution has moved from small to larger and more complex aggregates, from family to village or city, from clan or tribe to expanded forms within regions and to our present national units.

National units have assumed strong identities and in recent decades freedom struggles and the principles of self-determination, generally accepted by world opinion, have brought new nations into existence. The question to ask now is whether the nation is the largest natural unit as well as the last and ultimate one, or whether a greater aggregate will be formed embracing many and finally all nations.

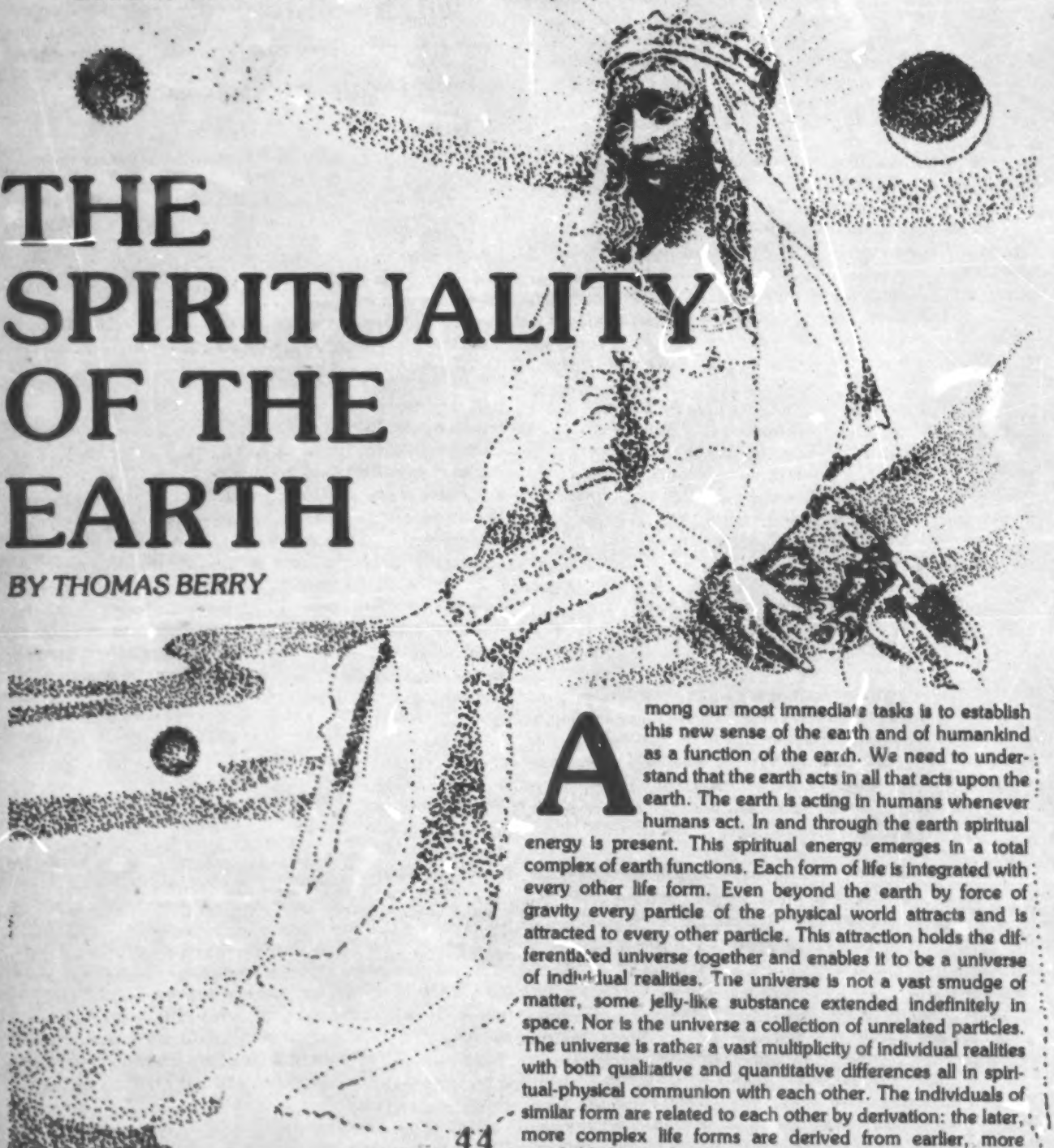
All former social groupings can be seen as stages in the progress towards universality. The forces which engendered the consciousness for the formation of national units will, in the course of time, bring forward a ready acceptance of world unity as a fact of life. It already appears that many people are becoming ready psychologically for loyalty to humanity beyond the ties of family, village or city, tribe or clan or caste, region and nation.

There is a growing readiness to appreciate the truth behind other religions. The time is coming when we human beings will accept the truth manifested and expressed in any quarter and consider all truths as complementary. We will come to realize that Truth is infinite and that we come in contact with higher and higher truths in the course of evolution.

This awareness will stimulate and promote a new world order with conditions and circumstances in which individuals will have the opportunity and motivation for inner growth and the development of all their potentialities, with the Cosmic Spirit as a guide in living.

As always at the beginning of any constructive change, conservative or hostile forces want to oppose a new direction and maintain the *status quo*. In fact, as the old world order dissolves, one sees all around the world confusion, chaos and violence. However, the forces that are being stimulated by the tendencies towards a spiritual age are already shaping the new world order. Beneath the superficial events of our rapidly moving world, it seems that new truths and ideals are preparing the next evolutionary step of the human race. ■

The subject we are concerned with is the spirituality of the Earth. By this I do not mean a spirituality that is directed toward an appreciation of the earth. I speak of the earth as subject, not as object. I am concerned with the maternal principle out of which humans are born and whence they derive all that they are and all that they have. Humans in their totality are born of the earth. We are earthlings. The earth is our origin, our nourishment, our support, our guide. Our spirituality itself is earth-derived. If there is no spirituality in the earth then there is no spirituality in humans. Humans are a dimension of the earth. These two are totally implicated each in the other.



THE SPIRITUALITY OF THE EARTH

BY THOMAS BERRY

Among our most immediate tasks is to establish this new sense of the earth and of humankind as a function of the earth. We need to understand that the earth acts in all that acts upon the earth. The earth is acting in humans whenever humans act. In and through the earth spiritual energy is present. This spiritual energy emerges in a total complex of earth functions. Each form of life is integrated with every other life form. Even beyond the earth by force of gravity every particle of the physical world attracts and is attracted to every other particle. This attraction holds the differentiated universe together and enables it to be a universe of individual realities. The universe is not a vast smudge of matter, some jelly-like substance extended indefinitely in space. Nor is the universe a collection of unrelated particles. The universe is rather a vast multiplicity of individual realities with both qualitative and quantitative differences all in spiritual-physical communion with each other. The individuals of similar form are related to each other by derivation: the later, more complex life forms are derived from earlier, more simple life forms.

We need a spirituality that emerges out of a reality deeper than the human, even deeper than life, a spirituality that is as deep as the earth process itself, a spirituality that is born out of the solar system and even out of the heavens beyond.

The first shaping of the universe was into those great galactic systems of fiery energy that constitute the starry heavens. In these celestial furnaces the elements are shaped. Eventually, after some ten billion years, the solar system and the earth are born out of the stardust resulting from exploded stars. Earth particularly is our concern. As far as we know, earth is unique among heavenly bodies. Here life, both plant and animal life, was born in the primordial seas some three billion years ago. Plants came out upon the land some six hundred million years ago after the planet earth had shaped itself through a great series of transformations which created the continents, the mountains, the valleys, the rivers and streams. The atmosphere was long in developing. The animals came ashore along with the plants. As the life forms established themselves over some hundreds of millions of years the luxuriant foliage formed layer after layer of matter which was then buried in the crust of the earth to become fossil formations. One hundred million years ago flowers appeared and the full beauty of earth began to manifest itself. Some sixty million years ago the birds were in the air. Animals walked the forests. Some of the mammals, the whales and porpoises and the dolphins, went back into the sea.

Finally some two million years ago the ascending forms of life culminated in the awakening consciousness of humankind. Wandering as food gatherers and hunters during all of this time, humans began to settle into village life some eight thousand years ago. This led to the classical civilizations which have flourished so brilliantly over the past five thousand years.

Then some four hundred years ago a new stage of scientific development took place. By the 18th and 19th centuries, humans had brought about a technological dominance of the earth out of which they had emerged. This can be interpreted as the earth awakening to consciousness of itself in humankind. The story of this awakening consciousness is the most dramatic episode of the entire earth story.

An adequate explanation of the spiritual attitude that caused or permitted humans to then attack the earth with such savagery as we now witness has never been given. That it was and is being done by a Christian-derived society, even especially in light of the belief that this constitutes a proper human and Christian task, makes explanation particularly harsh for western society.

Possibly it was the millennial drives toward a total transformation of the human condition that led humans, resentful that the perfect world had not yet been achieved by divine means, to set about the violent subjugating of the earth by their own powers in the hope that in this way they would attain the higher life and heal their afflictions.

While this is the positive goal sought, it must be added that the negative, even fearful, attitude toward the earth resulting from the general hardships of life led to the radical disturbance of the entire earth process. The increasing intensity shown in exploiting the earth was also the result of the ever rising and unsatiated expectation of the western peoples. Even further, the natural antagonisms of earth were explained by the Darwinian principle of the survival of the fittest, indicating that the primary attitude of each individual and each species is for its own survival at the expense of the others. Out of this strife, supposedly, the glorious achievements of earth would take place. Darwin's blindness to the cooperative and mutual inter-dependence of all forms of life is amazing since he himself discovered the great web of life. Still he could not appreciate the principle of inter-communion.

New Attitudes Towards the Earth

Much more needs to be said on the conditions that permitted such a mutually destructive situation to arise between humankind and the earth, but we must now address the need for a new attitude toward the earth. This involves a new spiritual and even mystical communion with the earth, a true aesthetic of the earth, a valid economy of the earth. We need a way of designating the earth-human world in its continuity and wholeness rather than in its discontinuity and difference. In spirituality especially we need to recognize the numinous qualities of the earth. We might begin with some awareness of what it is to be human, what is the role of consciousness on the earth, and what is the place of humans in the universe.

While the scholastic definition of humans as rational animals gives us some idea of their place among the biological

species it gives us a rather inadequate sense of the role they play in the total earth process. The Chinese have a better definition of humans as the *hsin* of heaven and earth. This word *hsin* is written as a pictograph of the human heart. It should be translated by a single word or a phrase conveying both a feeling and an understanding aspect. It could be expressed by saying that humans are the "understanding heart of heaven and earth." Even briefer is Julia Ch'ing's phrasing that humans are the "heart of the universe." It could, finally, be translated by saying that humans are "the consciousness of the world," or "the psyche of the universe." Here we have a remarkable feeling for the absolute dimensions of the human, the total integration of reality in humankind, the total integration of humankind in reality.

We need a spirituality that emerges out of a reality deeper than the human, even deeper than life, a spirituality that is as deep as the earth process itself, a spirituality that is born out of the solar system and even out of the heavens beyond. There in the stars is where the primordial elements take shape in both their physical and psychic aspects. Out of these elements the solar system and the earth took shape, and out of the earth, humankind.

A spirituality is a mode of being in which not only the divine and the human commune with each other but humans discover themselves in the universe and the universe discovers itself in them. The Sioux Indian Crazy Horse called upon these depths of his own being when he invoked the cosmic forces to support himself in battle. He painted the lightning upon his cheek, placed a rock behind his ear, and set eagle feathers in his hair along with the head of a hawk. Assumption of the cosmic insignia is also evident in the sun dance ceremony. In this rite the symbols of the sun and moon and stars are cut out of rawhide and worn by the dancers. The world of living moving things is indicated by the form of the buffalo cut from rawhide, and by the eagle feathers. The plant world is represented by the cottonwood tree set in the center of the ceremonial circle. The Supreme Spirit itself is represented by the circular form of the dance area.

Just so, spiritual personalities should feel that they are constantly in communion with those numinous cosmic forces out of which they were born. This cosmic-earth order needs to be supplemented by the entire historical order of humankind's development such as was depicted on the shield of Achilles by Homer and on the shield of Aeneus by Virgil. Virgil spends several long pages enumerating the past and future historical events wrought on Aeneus' shield by Vulcan at the command of Venus, Aeneus' heavenly mother. All these forces are presently available to us in a new mode of appreciation. The historical and the cosmic can be seen as a single process. This vision of earth-human development provides the sustaining dynamics of the contemporary world.

That there is an organizing force within the earth process with both physical and psychic dimensions needs to be acknowledged in language and in imagery. It needs to be named and spoken of in its integral form. It has a unified functioning similar to the more particular organisms with which we are acquainted. When we speak of earth we are speaking of a numinous reality, an eternal principle in and through which the total complex of earth phenomena takes its shape. Recently, biologist Lewis Thomas, when considering the integration of life systems of the earth, had a sudden intuition in which he saw the total life process of earth as a single cell. Such is their radical inter-dependence.

In antiquity this mode of being of the earth was indicated by personification. The name "Earth" itself designates a deity in Hesiod and in the Homeric hymns. This personification is expressed as Cybele in the Eastern Mediterranean and as Demeter in the Greek world. Biblical revelation represents a basic antagonism between the transcendent deity, Jahweh, and the earth mother of the surrounding societies. There is a basic effort here to keep the asymmetry in the relationship between the divine and the created. In the doctrine of the Madonna in later Christian history there are many passages indicating that Mary was to be thought of as the Earth which had been made fruitful by the Holy Spirit and in which the True Vine had been planted. This Mary-Earth equation was not developed as adequately in conjunction with the doctrine of the Incarnation as it might have been.

Probably it belongs to the dialectics of history that the direct personal association of humankind with the two unique historical individuals, the Saviour and His Mother, had to develop berore any adequate feeling for the mystique of the earth could take place. Perhaps, too, a full development of redemption processes was needed before this new mode of human-earth communion could find expression in our times.

However this may be, a shift in attention is now taking place. Several things are happening. The most notable single event is that modern science is giving us a new and more comprehensive account of the birth of humankind out of the earth

The story of this birth has never been known so well as now. After the delineation of the geological stages of earth transformation and the revelation of the sequence of life in ancient fossil remains by Louis le Clerc, James Hutton and Charles Lyell, came the depiction of the emergence of all forms of life from primordial life forms by Charles Darwin in his *On The Origin of Species* in 1859. While Darwin saw the birth of humans out of the physical earth only, Teilhard de Chardin saw the birth out of both the physical and psychic dimensions of the earth. Thus the whole burden of modern earth studies is to narrate the story of the birth of humans from our Mother the Earth.

The Meaning of Mother Earth

Once this story is told it immediately becomes obvious how significant the title Mother Earth really is, how intimate a relationship exists, how absolute our gratitude as humans must be, how delicate our concern. Our long motherless period is coming to a close. Hopefully, too, the long period of our mistreatment of earth is being terminated. If it is not terminated, if we fail to perceive not only our earth origin but also our continuing dependence on our earth-mother, it will be due in no small measure to the ephemeral spiritualities

that have governed our own thoughts and attitudes and actions.

In this mother-child relationship a new, fundamental and significant shift in dependence has now taken place. Until recently the child was taken care of by the mother. Now, however, the mother must be extensively cared for by the child. The child has grown to adult status. The mother-child relationship needs to undergo a renewal similar to that in the human process of maturing. In this process both child and mother experience a period of alienation. Then follows a reconciliation period when mother and child relate to each other with a new type of intimacy, a new depth of appreciation, and a new mode of inter-dependence. Such is the historical period in which we are now living. Development of this new mode of earth-human communion can only take place within a profound spiritual context. Thus the need for a spirituality that will encompass this process.

As a second observation concerning our newly awakening sense of the Earth we could say that a new phase in the history of the Madonna figure of western civilization has begun. Association of the Virgin Mother with the Earth may now be a condition of Mary returning to the center of western civilization. Her presence may also be a condition for overcoming our estrangement from the earth. In the western world the earth known only in itself as universal mother is not sufficient. It must be identified with an historical person in and through whom earth functions in its ultimate reaches. Phrases referring to Mary as the Earth are found throughout western religious literature. Whether this is anything more than a simple rhetorical device needs a thorough inquiry at the present time. This remains a subject of utmost importance for our entire civilizational venture, whether or not it has been treated in any extensive manner in previous Christian literature. Few if any other civilizations were so deeply grounded in a feminine mystique as that of the Medieval period of Western Christendom. A vital contact with this earlier phase of western civilization is hardly possible without some deep appreciation of its feminine component. Thus we cannot fail to unite in some manner these two realities: Earth and Mary. The Earth needs embodiment in an historical person, so such an historical person needs an earth identity to fulfill adequately her role as divine Mother.

A third observation is that the emergence of the new age of human culture will necessarily be an age dominated by the symbol of woman. This too depends on the identification of woman with the earth and its creativity. Woman and Earth, these two are inseparable. The fate of one is the fate of the other. This association is found in such a variety of cultural developments throughout the world in differing historical periods that it is hardly possible to disassociate the two. Earth consciousness, woman consciousness: these go together. Both play a stupendous role in the spirituality of humankind as well as in the structure of civilizations. Our alienation from the earth, from ourselves, and from a truly creative man-woman relationship in an overly masculine mode of being demands a reciprocal historical period in which not only a balance will be achieved but even, perhaps, a period of feminine emphasis.

A fourth observation I would make is to note our new capacity for subjectivity, for subjective communion with the manifold presences that constitute the universe. In this we are recovering the most primitive genius of humans. In their earlier years they experienced both the intimacy and the distance of their relations with the earth and with the entire natural world. Most significantly, they lived in a spirit world, a world that could be addressed in a reciprocal mood of affectionate concern. This is what gave rise to sympathetic magic as well as to the great rituals, the majestic poetry, and the awesome architecture of past ages. Nothing on earth was a mere "thing." Every being had its own divine numinous subjectivity, its self, its center, its unique identity. Every being was a presence to every other being. Among the more massive civilizations China gave clearest expression to this intimacy of beings with each other in its splendid concept of *Jen*. All beings are held together in *Jen* as in Saint Paul all things are held together in Christ. Perhaps an even better analogy is to say that while for Newton the universal law of gravity whereby each particle of matter attracts and is attracted to every other particle of matter in the universe indicates a mere physical force of attraction, the universal law of attraction for the Chinese is a form of feeling identity.

For this reason there is in China the universal law of compassion. This is especially observable in humans, for all have hearts that cannot bear to witness the suffering of others. When the objection was made to Wang Yangming in the 15th century that this is evident only in human relations, Master Wang replied by noting that even the frightened cry of the bird or the crushing of a plant, the shattering of a tile or the senseless breaking of a stone immediately and spontaneously causes pain in the human heart. This would not be, he tells us, unless there exists a bond of intimacy and even identity between ourselves and these other beings.

Reality of this capacity for subjective communion with the earth is a consequence and a cause of a newly emerging spirituality. Subjective communion with the earth, identification with the cosmic-earth-human process, provides the context within which we now make our spiritual journey. This is no longer the journey of Dante through the heavenly spheres, nor is it simply the journey of the Christian Community through history to the heavenly Jerusalem. It is the journey of primordial matter through its marvelous sequence of transformations in the stars, in the earth, and in humankind toward an ever more complete spiritual-physical intercommunion of the parts with each other, with the whole, and with that numinous presence which has ever been manifested throughout this entire cosmic-earth-human process. ■

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The tree is life — our life — becoming what it can be within and dependent on the larger sphere of life.

The contrasting fluid fields of dark and light are the ancient elements: earth and water (dark), air and fire (light).

The dark and light are also the yin and yang of life. They are the opposites which cannot exist apart, and which together are an integral whole. They are the inner and outer dimensions of our humanization — of our shared present and future.

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The bird winging from its tree home with the fruits of the tree's fulfillment is love, is liberation, is joy, is meaning, is purpose, is the interconnectedness and ongoingness of life, is hope.